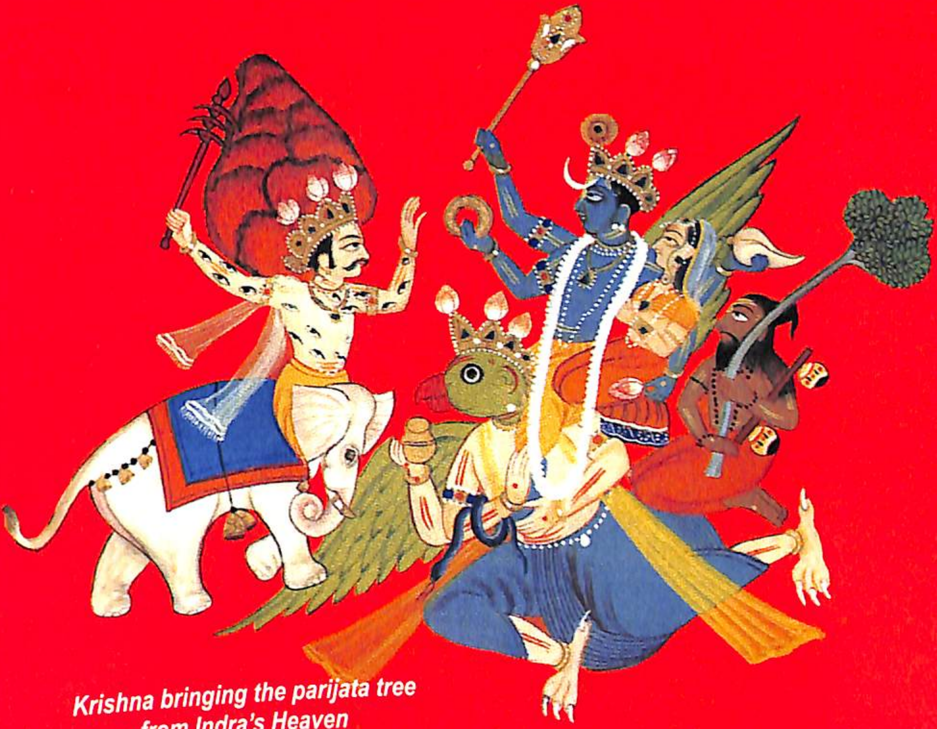
Divine Touch

(Some Fundamentals of Trika Philosophy)



Krishna bringing the parijata tree
from Indra's Heaven

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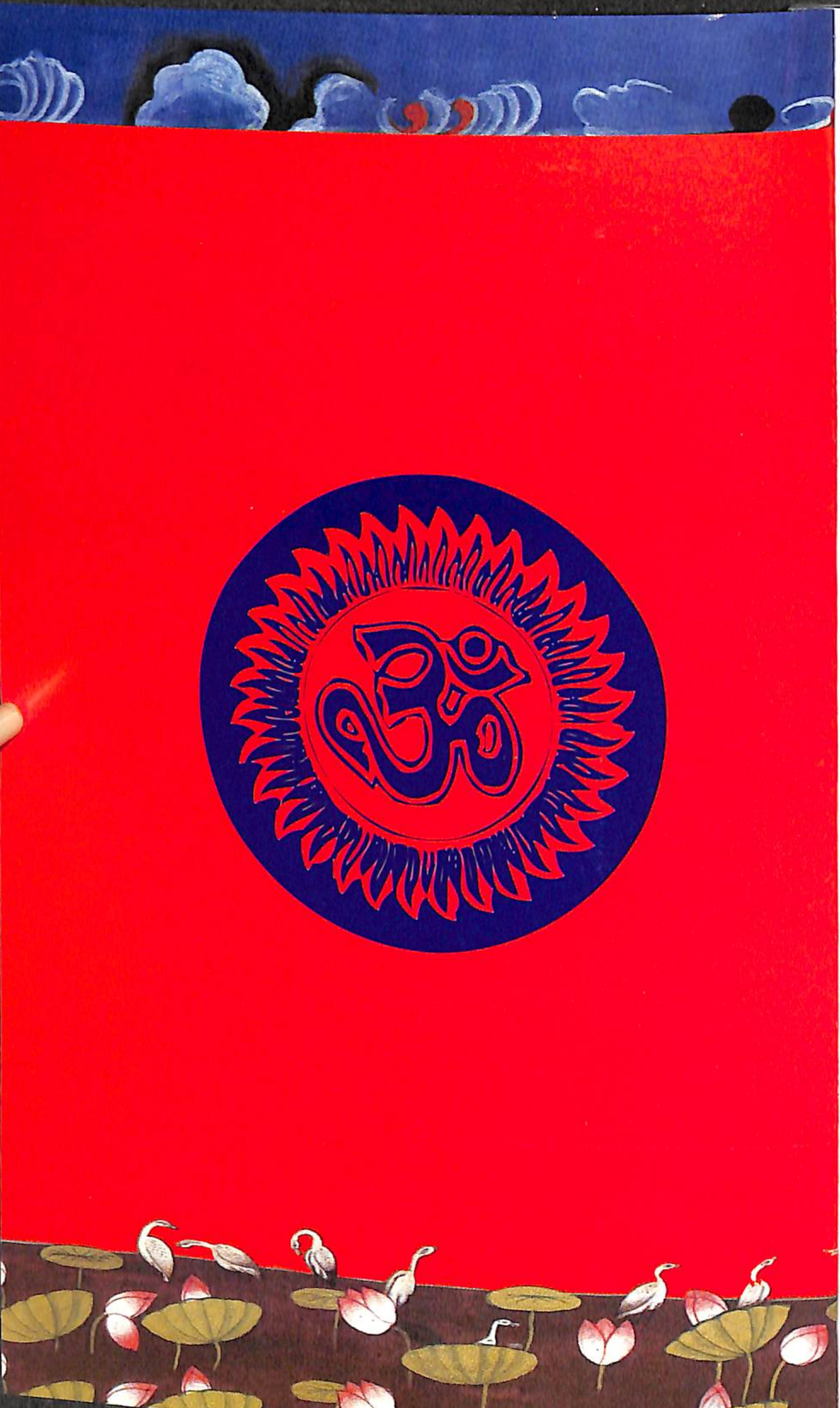
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DIVINE TOUCH

(Some Fundamentals of Trika Philosophy)

By:

VISH NATH JOTSHI (BHAT)

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INTRODUCTION

Kashmir is the home of the famous Trika system. The sages and scholars of Kashmir have made rich contribution to literature and philosophy of Trika system of Kashmir Shaivism. The exponents of this thought were Vasu Guptacharya, Somananda Utpallacharya, Butta Kallatta, Rama Kantha, Abhinav Gupt, Khem Raj, Yog Raj and so on.

The book contains seventeen papers contributed by the author Shri V. N. Jotshi (Bhat). These papers deal with several aspects of Kashmir Shaivism; the aspect of Sadhna has been discussed in particular.

My good wishes to the author and I hope that the attempt shall be helpful to the students who are interested in Trika system of Kashmir Shavism.

Dr. Jaikishen Sharma

PREFACE

The great Chinese sage Lao Tze once said about the truth: "Truth cannot be said in words and that which can be said in words is not Truth".

Various people have tried to seek Truth through idol worship, prayer, meditation, Japa and rituals. As a matter of fact all such efforts are symbols. All scriptures are in fact words. Words are also symbols. They in themselves are not the truth. In fact, without self knowledge whatever one does in the name of religion is nothing but illusion and an escape from oneself. A man is in himself a spiritual entity but his desire for the attainment of one thing or the other takes him further away from his essence. In the Bhagwad Gita the Lord does not advise Arjun to discard bad desires or own good desires. He preaches Arjun to discard all desires.

संकल्प प्रभवान्कामांस्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः।
मनसैवेन्द्रिय ग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः।। [BG 6-24]

One should completely renounce all desires arising from thoughts of the world and curb by the mind all senses from all sides.

The present book contains a number of articles so that a first time reader is initiated into the basics of Trika Philosophy, which has explored in depth the principle of unity in the diversity of the universe.

Moreover, in Trika, Prakash and Vimarsh means what exists is reality and what makes us aware of the existence of what exists. This is one universal consciousness and the very consciousness denotes our existence. Consciousness is the fountainhead of creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe.

In this small volume I have made a humble attempt to put in writing whatever little I have understood about Trika Philosophy from highly accomplished seers in both Sadhna (Practice) and philosophical system of the school of Trika.

I express my thanks to S/Shri Pradeep Koul (Khudbali) and Prof. B.L. Fotedar for going through the proof copy and its improvement.

Iti Shivam.

V. N. Jotshi (Bhat)

Dedicated to the memory of my wife

Late Shrimati Jai Kishori

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SELF OR TRUE KNOWLEDGE

In the context of the present times the meaning of knowledge is treated as knowledge of a particular subject or subjects. That is simply conceptual knowledge as actually this is gathering information for further use. Whatever is experienced or whatever is heard from others gets accumulated in our mind, and whenever an occasion arises, we use it. This is mere information regarding various matters. It does not touch one's being.

To accumulate information about God and to know God directly are two different things. Those who are busy in collecting information about God cannot know Him. There is always distinction between accumulation of information and knowledge. To see light and to know about light are two different things. Similarly there is distinction between real knowledge and conceptual knowledge. Ancient Rishis regarded higher knowledge as "Para Vidhya."

Accumulation of information for self knowledge is a hindrance because it is always wedded to the past, while self knowledge is possible only in the present. Gathered from outside, it is known as conceptual knowledge and is completely different from the inner knowledge. The conceptual knowledge is only thinking about reality but this thinking about reality is not actual reality. We accept the teaching of many scriptures but the real knowledge comes from inner perception. There should be no difference between our selves and that knowledge. Acquired knowledge makes the knower assertive but true knowledge obliterates the ego of the knower and when he is completely empty of his ego, then only the Truth unfolds itself to him. We have to die to live. It is said, "He Saveth life who loseth it."

Sometimes the question arises within our mind "what am I?" It is knowledge of the movement of our conscious and unconscious mind. By constant awareness of what one does, feels or thinks, one can find out what one is and that is 'Self Knowledge.'

Awareness means to be alive internally and externally otherwise life is only like a dream. Constant awareness eliminates all thoughts and gives a feeling of quietitude. Wakeful awareness is self consciousness which in other words is Ultimate Reality.

"Shrimat Bhagwad Gita Says:-

या निशा सर्व भूतानां तस्या जागर्ति संयमी
यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा रात्रिः पश्यति मुनेः॥ (2-71)

> A Yogi keeps awake during what appears night for others. Similarly what appears day to others is night for a Muni (Perfect being).

The moment we realize that we are inattentive, we become attentive. To be aware that we are not aware is awareness. In order to attain self knowledge we must live in relationship and not in isolation. It is one's reaction to all objects, things and persons which reflects one's real self and it is only by a study of these reactions that one can know oneself. We can not know ourselves in solitude. Isolation, resistance, and suppression are all hindrances to self knowledge. This can be discovered through relationship. In absence of challenges one gets misled to believe that one has conquered passion etc. Without true knowledge all learning leads to ignorance and illusion. This awareness will lead to self knowledge which opens gate to the ultimate reality. In course of time he is bestowed with love, compassion, charity, etc. automatically without any effort. Therefore, one lives in bliss, peace and tranquility continuously.

Acharya Utpal- Deva in his celebrated work Sivas- Trutavali says:-

> **लोकव्द्धव-तुमे विषयेषु स्फीत इव भगवन्परितर्षः**
> **केवलं तव शरीर तयैतान् लोकयेयमहमस्त विकल्पः** (VIII-5)
>
> (O Lord' like others let me be engrossed in worldly pleasures as abundantly as I wish but with a condition that all such pleasures should appear to be embedded in you, so that my thought differentiation in these pleasures is totally removed)."

What is the use of knowing about everything else when we do not know who we are? It is said, without understanding our selves, the search of so called Reality is an escape from our selves. Without self knowledge the God that we seek is the God of illusion and illusion inevitably brings conflict and sorrow.

Yogis do not view their understanding as different from the Supreme Principles - their true inner nature. The inner principle, with its own vibration arises as one's limited understanding gives an object definite characteristics which are also limited. This all is the result of the vibration of consciousness as Jnana Shakti.

Jnana Shakti is a vibration of consciousness, the result of its play is also not different from consciousness. When the vibration becomes limited, objects are perceived with limited vision. This understanding is called Grahya Grahaka Bhava—awareness of the subject–object relationship. Constant vibration of the perceived is not actually different from the perceiver.

A person should seek his own self and understand the world. He should know God who permeates the forms of the world. When he understands, and knows his own self all his old impressions subside. He never feels 'I am' different from God. He experiences the entire universe as being filled with supreme consciousness. This kind of understanding is true nature of knowledge. It is said, "To know God is to become God." Awareness is the reality of everything. Having differentiated knowledge and not having undifferentiated knowledge is bondage.

Knowledge that is inherent in our conscious lives is limited knowledge. Real knowledge being unlimited and undifferentiated and identical with consciousness is the essence of reality. Hence it is defined as Self knowledge or True knowledge.

* * *

HINDUISM

Hinduism literally speaking is the religion and customs of Hindus. A Hindu is one who is a believer in a form of Brahmanism i.e. one of the religions of India.

In his lecture which he delivered at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago on 19th Sep. 1893 Swami Vivekananda said, "three religions stand in the world, which have come down to us from prehistoric times, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Judaism. They have all received tremendous shocks, and all of them prove by their survival their inner strength. Sects after sects arose in India and seemed to shake the religion of the Vedas to its very foundation but like the waters of the seashore in a tremendous earthquake it receded only for a while, only to return in all-absorbing flood – a thousand times more vigorous and when the tumult rush was over these sects were all sucked in, absorbed and assimilated into the immense body of the mother faith."

Essence of true religion consists of nothing but the eternal truths and laws of the spiritual world. These principles have been discovered by the sages of ancient India. The degradation of Hindus took place because the life giving principles of religion or Hinduism was applied in the practical life to solve social and national problems. Caste tyranny, loss of faith in their inherent powers and social neglect, reduced poor masses to mere cogs in the wheels of the exploitative machine which was run by few powerful people.

In reality if religion of the Vedas i.e. Hinduism was spread among the poor masses, it would awaken the dormant powers in them and they would be able to solve their problems.

According to Max Muller Hindus were a philosophical race, whose conflicts were intellectual conflicts. Fortunately India then was a country where the people had no lack of wealth, food and security. Having the Himalyas in the north and ocean on three sides, the country was free from the danger of foreign invasion. Nature was also favourable. In such a place in the *Ashrams* and *Tapovans*, the Indian rishis absorbed themselves in deeper truths of life which gave birth to Indian philosophy.

Dr. Radha Krishnan writes "The native utterances of the Vedic poets, the wondrous suggestiveness of the Upanishad's, the marvelous psychological analysis of the Buddhists and the stupendous system of Shankara are quite as interesting and instructive from the cultural point of view as the system of Plato, Aristotle, Kant and Hegel, if only we study them in true scientific frame of mind, without disrespect for the past or contempt for the alien".

Philosophy had a great impact and importance in India – especially to Hinduism from the earliest times. "Darshan" as philosophy is called, etymologically means, "Seeing". This seeing is possible by perceptual observation, direct experience, inference or self-realization. Indian philosophy recognizes that truth can never be self-contradictory. Therefore, in order to realize the distinction and relation of philosophy and religion i.e. Hinduism in the present context, we must first know what religion is. The word religion includes two Latin terms "Religio and Onis". Re-means again, ligio means to bind. Literally speaking religion binds a man again to his source. Philosophers have emphasised one or the other aspect of it. Some important approaches in this connection are as follows:-

Intellectual Approach: Religion is clearly a state of mind.

Moral Approach: Religion is nothing but morality touched with emotion.

Axiological Approach: God cannot be called the highest value because there is no unvalued phenomenon with which God can be contrasted.

There are various definitions of Hinduism as a religion. Hinduism is a complex phenomenon in which one finds attitudes and feelings towards ultimate reality or God. From the definition of religion given by Shri Aurobindo, Hinduism appears to be highly comprehensive. To quote him "in most essence of religion... is the search for God and finding of God. Its work is sincere giving out of the true and ultimate relation between man and God, relation of unity, relation of difference, relation of an illuminated knowledge and ecstatic love and delight, and absolute surrender and service, casting of every part of our existence of its normal status into up rush of man towards the Divine and descent of divine into man". This is true even today when we talk of Modern Hinduism.

Our age is known as atomic age. By controlling atomic energy man has achieved things which were formerly even beyond his imagination. In the form of atom bombs he has developed an instrument of destruction whose after effects can be seen years after its use. Many nations, developed or even underdeveloped, of the world are busy in piling up such destructive weapons and many other nations are trying hard to copy them. This has made the thinkers of the world to worry about the future of man because an atomic war will not only lead to destruction and death but also deformities of crores of people and poisoning of the atmosphere and water to the extent of making human life practically impossible on this planet.

But international peace and cooperation cannot be achieved through science alone because science is unable to do anything in this situation. This is on the other hand moral and spiritual problem. For example, the philosophy of the Gita and the Upanishads may be found to be most useful to man at the present juncture. Hence it can be said that in this atomic age science is more in need of philosophy than it has ever been.

Ancient Indian thinkers of Hinduism have suggested different paths for reaching God or Truth, which is relevant in modern times also. These are classified into three chief paths of action, or knowledge and of devotion. In fact these are the phases or the three different layers of human mind. Here we shall take the path of action. This is the way of choice between the right and the wrong, the good and the evil. One has to follow the right way and give up the wrong way. Gradually the evil will be eliminated and the good will be established which will ultimately lead one to godliness/divinity.

The question arises how to ascertain which action is good and which is evil Mahavir's advice is to walk carefully, so that we do not tread over even an ant. On the other hand, Lord Krishna advises Arjuna to fight the evil forces because no one dies, as the soul is immortal.

In ancient times Sri Rama accepted and abided by all limitations and restrictions of the society that is why he is called "Maryada Purshotam" while Shri Krishna who disregarded all social limitation and restrictions is still called – "Yogeshwara Krishna". On the one hand Sita is adored as she never even saw the face of another man except her husband Rama but on the other hand Draupadi who was the wife of five Pandvas is regarded as a virtuous lady. Yudishthira had staked his wife in a game of dice and yet he is called Dharam Raj. Bishma was witness to the disrobing of Draupdi and did nothing to avoid that incident, yet he is called an apostle of morality and righteousness. Parsurama killed his mother at the behest of his father and is yet called a great rishi. Therefore, no universal standard can be set for deciding what is good and what is evil. It deals with doing, not with being. So long as one does not know his inner self all his actions are cravings of the mind for the fulfillment of desires. That is why Indra says "in the first instance try and realize what the Atman is so that all the doubts are answered. Socrates has said, "know thy self".

Modern vision of Hinduism warrants us to rededicate ourselves to the pursuit of knowing the Self, because we possess spiritual wealth that can end all our woes. Secondly, we must inculcate a sense of unity and identity. Self-realization is the real definition of Hinduism.

Taittriya Upanishad declares in Tantr III-1

यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते येन जातानि जीवन्ति ।
यं प्रयन्ति अभिसंविशान्ति तज्जिज्ञासस्व तदेव ब्रह्म ॥

"That from which all those beings come into existence, that by which they live, that into which they are finally absorbed, know that be the eternal verity – the Absolute".

Once in the Ashram of Ramana Maharshi a visitor made display of his knowledge by enumerating the various paths described by various masters and quoting from western philosophers. He inquired "one says one thing and the other says another which way should I go?" Ramana Maharishi rose to leave the hall, he replied curtly "Go the way you came".

Speaking about the intellectual persons, Shri Ramana Maharshi has said, "They have made themselves like a gramophone. What else are they, Oh Arunachala? It is the unlearned who are saved, rather those whose ego has not subsided despite their learning. It is sincerity that is required and not brilliance or understanding of theory, humility, and not mental pride".

PARAM SHIVA OR SUPREME CONSCIOUSNESS

There are numerous names to describe the blissful Param Shiva who both transcends the universe and who is the universe. He is the highest bliss and consists of mass of "Prakasha" – consciousness which is His essential nature. In scriptural language He is called Para Bhairavatmata, Paramadeva, Parmashirabattarka, Parmananda, Paramsata, Paramsamvith, Parmeshwra, Parmdeva, Paradevya, Para Barava etc. Actually the highest blissful Shiva alone manifests Himself in numerous forms of multiplicity. Parmshiva is the embodiment of both Grahaka (the perceiver) and the Grahaya (the perceived). Through His consciousness He gives rise to 36 Tattavas (elements) which in turn give birth to universe and its related functions.

Paramshiva means the highest experient while as Shiva, the first principle among 36 Tattavas, is the Highest principle. Paramshiva is the highest reality – the Absolute.

Shivabattarika transcends all the experients from Sakla – to Mantra - Maheswara and constitutes only Prakasha and states or modes which are only in the form of Prakasha (light-consciousness). Let us discuss all the experients viz. Sakala, Pralayakala, Vigyanakala, Mantra, Mantreshwara, Mantramaheshwara.

Sakala: This is the limited experient. He is mentally engrossed in the experience of outward activities, and does not have true knowledge of the self. He is subject to Anavamala (Imperfection), Mayamala (differentiation), Karammala (attachments).

Pralayakala: the experient in this state is absolutely unaware of world activities as well as God consciousness i.e. he has neither the clear consciousness of Aham (I-ness) nor Idam (This-ness). The experient rests in Mayatatwa and is cognizant of *Sunya* or void only.

Vigyanakala: Here the experient is below Shudvidhya but above Maya and experiences pure awareness. He is absolutely peaceful and experiences internal joy of self. His experiences are either through sound or smell etc., but are subject to Anavmala (imperfection).

Mantra: This is the stage where experient has realized Shudvidhya and experiences Sat (the eternal), Chit (awareness), Anand (bliss). He remains in blissful state always but at the same time his perception of the world remains in his subconscious, whose sole essence consists of differentiation (Bheda).

Mantraeshwara: It is the state when a yogi not only experiences God consciousness inside and outside, but both consciousness of "I" and "This" i.e. Ahanta and Identa are distinct. He feels worldly activities first and then sinks in God consciousness. Here the experient realizes Ishwartattva (Shivahood or Godhood).

Mantramaheshwara: In this stage a yogi experiences God consciousness in and out (within his self and also in the outside world). Mantra Maheshwara is the experient who has realized Sadashiv Tattva निमेषोऽन्त - सदाशिवः. In this state the universe is experienced as an ideal state. Here "will" is predominant. The Yogi's experience in this state is consciousness of "I". Here objective activities are at incipient stage.

Apart from this the universe of ordinary experience contains infinite permutations of consciousness. When the Lord who is consciousness enters the sphere of the body, Prana etc. gives birth to external objects and feelings of pleasure and pain. Consciousness is both self-luminous and independent. It encompasses all powers and is the cause of everything. It is called Paramsamvith.

For practical purposes, the universe is divided into four categories, the knower, the means of knowing, the objects known, and knowledge. In scriptural language these are called Pramata, Pramana, Premiya and Pramiti. Pramana is the different way of knowing and understanding the nature and activities by Pramata – the limited individual soul. The object universe is Primiya and its correct understanding is Primitri. Paramshiva who is wave less ocean of consciousness does not have these categories. Since the universe is not different from Him, there are no means separate from Him by which to know Him. Shiva is both the means and the end. In the state of Parmashiva, Shiva is transcendental; He is always filled with bliss. In His immanent aspect, through independent power eternal "I" Paramshiva has the power of becoming pervasive and reveals seven experiences mentioned above.

He has five fold divine energies also:

1. Divine consciousness
2. Divine Bliss
3. Divine will
4. Divine cognition
5. Divine Act

When these five fold divine energies are united with Lord Shiva, everything around will be शिव शक्तिमय; known as Parmshivahood. These five powers continually dwell in Him, whether He is in transcendent or in His immanent state. Through His power of illumination (Chitshakti) Paramshiva is self-luminous and independent. He has full sovereignty. Through Anand Shakti He has the ability to experience bliss within Himself without any external cause and support. He is the embodiment of Supreme bliss. Through His Iccha Shakti (His will power), He can do anything without opposition and with firm resolution. Through His power of knowledge (Jnana Shakti) He can assimilate into Himself both the perceiver and the perceived. With His power of action (Kriya Shakti) He can create objects of various forms. Correlating with these powers Param Shiva performs five actions: creation, sustenance, dissolution, concealment and bestowal of grace.

नमः शिवाय सततं पन्चकृत्य विधायिने।
चिदानन्द घन स्वात्म परमार्थावभासिने।।

I adore that Shiva who always brings five processes, who makes manifest the highest reality, and who is consciousness and bliss, which is also the real self.

Creation refers to the creation of the universe.

Sustenance means maintenance of the creation.

Dissolution is the absorption of the creation into Himself.

Concealment is the state in which the creation remains within Him in a potential form before being recreated.

Bestowal of grace refers to the complete merging of the creation into the Universal Consciousness.

In this way Param Shiva is the whole and sole reality and there is no principle other than Shiva. So He appears both as the world or the field of experience, and the experient as the knower (Pramata), knowledge (Pramana) and the known (Prameya).

There are three different means of realization as per Trika system; they are Shambha Upaya, Shakt Upaya and

Aanav Upaya. Shambhupaya is the practice connected with the subject (Pramata). Shaktupaya is the experient connected with knowledge (Pramana) and Anavupaya is the practice in connection with objects (Prameya). Shambupaya comes through will power, Shaktupaya through knowledge and Anavupaya through Kriya.

In various schools of Shaivism, ultimate reality i.e. Paramshiva is the main focus. For instance:-

1. Pratibijna system means recognizing one self once again i.e. one recalls and reunites with original state of consciousness of Paramshiva.
2. Kula System is the highest state of Shiva from which and in which this whole universe arises and into which it merges. It is Paramshiva.

   यस्योन्मेष निमेषाभ्याम जगतः प्रलयोदयो।
   तं शक्ति चक्र विभव प्रभुवं शंकरं स्तुमः।।

3. Krama System stresses that the vital air, Prana and mind are independent. Through prescribed processes realization of one's true nature takes place, which is known as supreme consciousness.
4. Spanda System is the power of consciousness stimulating the senses. This whole process is enunciated in Vigyana Bhairava with reference to Spand Karika.

This universe is the play of that supreme consciousness or Paramshiva in which it arises and in which it merges both in its transcendent and immanent state.

God's divine powers are a reality, so are the manifestation of those powers a reality. These powers do not undergo any change even while the activity of creation is going on. He is pure limitless consciousness. This is the static aspect, which is known as Shiva. The aspect of one and the same absolute, or powerful and independent reality. Changeless principle of all changes in brief is known as Paramshiva or supreme consciousness.

PARAMESHWARI SHAKTI OR SUPREME ENERGY

The supreme Shakti is not different from all existing things. Her independent power has become:

a) Her power to give rise to bliss is Ananda Shakti.
b) Her power of creative will is Iccha Shakti.
c) Her power to understand is Jnana Shakti.
d) Her power to manifest all forms is Kriya Shakti.
e) It is Kriya Shakti which through Shaktipat makes a seeker perform various kinds of yogic functions.

Entire visible universe is the expansion of the sovereign power of the mighty Chitti. She exists in many forms. The independent Chitti Shakti vibrates without ceasing, primarily in Iccha Jnana and Kriya – She carries out Her work in all beings whether ignorant or wise.

A person's desires exist in an unmanifest form in his subconscious mind. The Chitta Shakti knows them through Her power of knowledge and manifests them through Her power of action (i.e. perceived by the mind). This mysterious and extra-ordinary Shakti is regarded as the Sacred Deity.

It is very important for a human being to awaken his Chitti. It is a power, a vibration an extra ordinary energy. It is the soul of an individual, and his vital force. It is conscious power behind the senses.

It is that which inspires the intellect and makes the mind contemplate. The great Shakti pervades this entire

Universe.

In a human being there are four bodies, one within the other, physical, subtle, causal and super causal. As the Shakti works in all four bodies, she gives rise to various amazing experiences. Physical body is experienced in its working state. Subtle body, which includes mind, senses and other subtle instruments is the vehicle for the dream state. Causal body is experienced in the deep sleep as blissful non-awareness. Super causal is made of pure consciousness – it is the State of transcendental experience.

The mighty Shakti is the vital force. As fire she gives heat and as the sun She gives light. She brings showers and makes us feel the wind. She blows everywhere. She is the earth; She exists in the form of all material objects.

No words can describe Her. She is a woman, She is a man. She is everything in the world. She is that which exists and that which does not exist. She is subtle vibration that arises as thoughts and feelings and then subsides back into the space of the heart. It is the mighty play of Shakti which gives rise to desire, greed, delusion, jealousy, enmity arrogance etc. Vital features of Shakti are the process of inhalation and exhalation. Inhalation subsides in the heart and is expelled in the form of exhalation by Shakti. After exhalation it merges with the outside phenomena. It is again the same Shakti which draws it in again and thus we live.

Ocean is nothing but a huge body of water. The waves, which arise at one place and fall somewhere else, are nothing but water. That which creates this movement is also water. No matter how high waves may leap, they cannot go beyond the ocean shores, however high the tide may be, its essence, which is water remains unchanged. Thus the basic unity of the ocean is never destroyed. When one attains perfection, the bondage of duality ceases to exist. The understanding derived from various gross and subtle principles take form in a group of letters and in the form of language. The letters arise from a source known as Matrika Shakti / Chakra.

A seeker who pursues the truth knows that everything from the gross body to Matrika Chakra is nothing but a group of powers or Shaktis. His main duty is to recognize the Supreme Principle, which is the source of these powers. It is not possible to recognize the Supreme Principle through the senses. The Supreme light can be recognized only through the purified will power, which brings an understanding that all the activities of the entire world occur because of the play of Parashakti. The understanding derived from various gross and subtle principles takes a form in the group of letters and in the form of languages. In addition to the three states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep, there is a fourth state which is called Turiya. In this state one recognizes oneself, one's own true nature, which can be recognized only through inner experiences and not through the senses. Trying to describe this state is like asking a dumb man to describe the sweets he is eating. One can attain that state by practice (advised by Guru) and renunciation.

A seeker may obtain supernatural powers when he attains the knowledge of his true nature. He should constantly be vigilant, otherwise his ego will bring his downfall.

In Shaivism Supreme bliss is called Mantraviriya (मन्त्रवीर्यः) the power of Mantra or Mudraviriya (मुद्रावीरयः) the power behind self realization. The Guru's grace is the means of attaining the potency of the Mantra. That grace is known as Shaktipat. Once it is obtained, manifestation of Shiva's Sawtantra Shakti becomes a means to be used to realize the universal reality of Shiva and his Shakti.

* * *

FUNDAMENTALS OF TRIKA PHILOSOPHY

1. लोकोत्तरानुभव सस्मित घूर्णमान।
स्वानन्द सुन्दर विनिर्मल निर्निमेषा।।
यत्स्फारतः पशुःअर्पि इश्वरतां प्रयाति।
सा कापि दृक् विजयते गुरु पुङ्गवानाम्।।

2. I bow to that pleasing, supernatural, vibrant, blissfully intoxicant, crystal clear invisible glance of Revered preceptor (गुरु) with whose grace even ignorant or (undeveloped) reach divinity.

3. Trika system has been recognized as the highest among all the Sadhana Paths that lead to self-recognition. In this system mind is to be withdrawn from objective activities and turned towards the subject, which is the real self and has to be merged into it.

विश्वात्मिकां तदुर्त्तीणा हृदयं परमेशितुः।
परादि शक्ति रूपेण स्फुरन्ती संविदं नुमः।।

(आ. क्षेमराज कृत परा प्रावेशिका)

4. We bow to that Samvit Devi i.e. Shiva's coordinating force or cosmic energy that is transcendental (independent of experience) and immanent. She is quintessence of Shiva and blossoms / projects into this universe

through the manifestation of the divine Shakti i.e.

Para = Psychic plane
Pashyanti = mental plane
Madayama = vital plane
Vaikhri = Physical plane

Or

Para = independent cosmic energy
Parapara = Unity in diversity or identical and different
Apara = where subject / object is different

Keeping these factors in the background, Param Shiva has infinite "Shaktis"; among them five are considered the main ones.

Cit = Power of Self-revelation
Ananda = Absolute bliss (स्वातन्त्र्या शक्ति) and sovereignity
Iccha = Will to create
Jnana = Power of knowing
Kriya = Power of assuming any or every form

Experience:

The Tattvas of universal experiences are five:

Siva = Initial creative movement
Shakti = Energy of Siva,
Sadasiva = The will i.e. "I" side of the universal experience. It is hazy (अस्फुट).
Isvara = This is Unmesha - Here total experience is more defined.
Shudvidya = 'I' and 'This' side of experience are equally balanced.

The Tattvas of limited individual experience are :

1. Maya 2. Kala 3. Vidya 4. Rag
5. Kala 6. Niyati

The Tattvas of the limited individual subject/object:

7. Purusa 8. Prakrati

Tattvas of Mental operation:

9. Budhi 10. Ahankara 11. Manas

Tattvas of Sensible experience:

12. Smelling 13. Tasting 14. Seeing
15. tactile 16. Hearing

Power of action:

17. Speaking 18. handling 19. Locomotion
20. Excreting 21. Sexual action

Perception :

22. Sound 23. Touch 24. Colour
25. Flavour 26. Odour

Five gross elements:

27. Space 28. Air 29. Fire
30. Water (liquid) 31. Earth

Shaivism teaches that this entire world is the play of consciousness. For this reason one does not have to undergo any kind of difficulty to attain God. Forgetfulness of one's true nature is the mass of ignorance which veils the experience of the self. All scriptures and Sadhanas are simply washing away the filth of ignorance. They have no ability of their own to reveal the wisdom of the self because that principle is self-existent, perfect and always manifest.

When a seeker becomes worthy of attaining the absolute, his mind becomes unshakable and contended. A fountain of joy wells up in ones heart when one's awareness becomes stable. He looks upon everyone with love and understands the following:

a. Harsh words are a sign of inner dryness.
b. Self-praise is evidence of non-attainment.
c. Cruelty is proof of hatred.
d. The idea of difference indicates the cancer of ignorance.
e. Living in the midst of people, the seeker loves all

but remains independent of everyone. He gives up all expectations.

The principal scriptures of Shaivism are the Shiva Sutras. These teachings were revealed by Shiva and were kept secret till the great Vasugupta disseminated them throughout the world.

The Shiv Sutras describe three upayas or means of Sadhna i.e.

1. Shambhava upaya (प्रकाश विमर्श)
2. Shakt upaya (अहं इद)
3. Anava upaya (पान अपान)

a. Shambhava upaya is the experience that the world is the embodiment of Shiva.
b. The Shakt upaya is the process by which the mind and intellect completely merge into the inner self.
c. The anava upaya is dualistic as also non-dualistic path because it leads to unity. It involves the use of body, mind, intellect, senses and Prana Shakti. Through Japa, meditation and other dharanas a person becomes one with Siva and attains peace of mind.

We do not need to know the scriptures to recognize our parents. Once our mother shows us who our father is, we do not have to mediate on him incessantly or repeat the mantras of his name. We always know him. In the same way at the precise moment when one recognizes the inner consciousness, as prakasha and vimarsha one becomes perfect. This is the Anupaya or Guru-Kripa-upaya – the path of Guru's grace. This upaya depends on seekers worthiness. Prakasha (light of consciousness) or Vimarsha (its awareness) are the two aspects of Param Shiva. Prakasha is Shiva, the static aspect, which is of the nature of light. Vimarsha is the dynamic aspect or Shakti through which

Param Shiva is able to survey Himself, and cause manifestation and dissolution.

Param Shiva or Para Sammvit contains various powers and whose nature is consciousness, is the supreme principle. It is described in the first Shiva Sutra "The self is consciousness". In truth there is nothing other than that conscious light, which is the ultimate Reality. This world is the play of that Principle – the universal consciousness.

Param Shiva Himself by contracting according to his own will brought about the effects of three impurities:

1. Aanav mala (देहभिमान) is ego.
2. Maya mala (भेद प्रथा) is differentiation.
3. Karma mala (पुण्य पाप वासना) is activities of virtue and vice.

Enveloped in three impurities, the individual soul falls under the influence of the letters or sound syllables, which are the basis of words. From these letters arises language, from language come ideas and from ideas comes understanding. The understanding derived from many factors which contribute to the functioning of a human being including the body, the senses the mind and various gross and subtle principles takes a form so that others can understand it. These letters arise from a source known as the matrika charka. From the gross body to the matrika charka there is nothing but a group of powers and shakties. All the letters in Sanskrit alphabets from अ to क्ष are referred to as matrika.

Shri Swami Vidhyadarji in his hymn to Goddess Saraswati has described it like this :

आदिक्षान्त समस्त वर्णविभवा यामातृकारूपिणी।
मंत्रः वीर्यः परामृत रसा स्वादात्सुख दायिनी।।
भाव व्रात समुद्द गर्भलहरी शब्दार्थ तत्त्व व्यापिनी।
सा मां पातुः सरस्वती भगवती श्री राज राजेश्वरी।।

The physical body, which is made up of five elements, has to be understood fully so should the *purishtaka* or subtle body, which is composed of five *tanmatras* along with the mind,. Ego and intellect. One should also understand the gross and subtle principles from Shiva to the Earth.

According to Shaivism the universe is the form of Shakti – the supreme principle. Shiva and Shakti are one, they are not separate.

A person, say a "Yogi", who has attained perfection considers the universe to be the light of his own self like the light produced by a flame. The knowledge of one's true nature (Aham-I) and the knowledge of the universe (Idam – this) merge into all pervading unity. This is the understating that one should have. The knowledge of "I" is like a flame and the knowledge of "this" is like its light, which spreads everywhere equally.

This universe of ordinary experience contains infinite permutations of consciousness such as in the form of manifestation of the materials of the world. *Nila* **(नीलपीत वर्ण आदि)** – blue is among the countless colours and forms that make up the objects perceived through the outer senses. Similarly Sukha – pleasure is one of the many experiences of inner senses. Deha – the body is the basis of the both inner and outer experiences. Para – vital force is one of the many conscious powers that makes the body function. This way the universe is full of numerous forms. Secondly, these are called Pramana (means of knowing) Pramata (the knower – subject) and Prameya (object of knowledge – object). Shiva is both the means and the end. No other light is needed to reveal light; it reveals itself and other objects as well. Similarly consciousness reveals its own nature and also gives the knowledge of other objects. It is called Para Samvit, Param Shiva or Chetanaya. Param Shiva is as serene as a still ocean. In this state Shiva is transcendent (independent of experience). He is always filled with bliss. In his immanent aspect through the independent power of the supreme I – consciousness, Param Shiva becomes the thirty six *tattavas* and reveals the seven experiences from within Himself. The experiences are :

शिव, मंत्रमहेश्वर, मन्त्रेश्वर, मंत्र, विज्ञानाकल, प्रलयाकल, सकल

Main aim of Jeeva (individual soul) is to

- Bring self consciousness (**आत्म चेतन्ता**) and universe together.
- Simple individual is known as (**सकल**) to whom all the three *malas* (coverings mentioned above) arise.
- After passing many transmigrations or births an individual gets awakened to knowledge of the identity of the soul with the supreme spirit.
- In case he still does not get awakened and gets entangled in cheap activities he remains bound by the fetters of malas (coverings).
- When he throws out all the three malas then eternal ego (**प्रमातृपद**) emerges and remains in (**शिवम्य आत्म स्वरूप**)
- Being constantly in this state, he gets perfection.

Shri Swami Mahadev Kak of Ratnipora has summed it up like this:

बनि क्या तस यस नॖ अंतरगत गॊव,
हनि हनि मीलिथ छु च़्यथ भैरव।
दन्यिवाद तस यस अज़लये प्रज़ल्येव।।

तनि मुच़िरिथ हनि हनि गॊसय ननि नॊन,
ख्यनिह त्रग्वण ओसुस वॊलमुत ख्योन।
गनि विर्मश व्वन्य आव चैतन्य रव,
हनि हनि मीलिथ छु च़्यथ भैरव।।

होश पोश नूल रोषह ज़ाव पोश वारे,
गोश गोश फ्यूर सुत्य ह्यथ वन हारे।
नीर पोशन व्यूर तुलान पाञ्चव मोखव,
हनि हनि मीलिथ छु ऩ्यथ भैरव।।

To conclude, there are three paths to reach to the ultimate reality:

1. Devotion (भक्ति)
2. Knowledge (ज्ञान)
3. Renunciation (त्याग)

But these three are meaningless without the guidance and grace of the Guru (called Guru Kripa).

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DOCTRINES OF SHAIVA (TRIKA) PHILOSOPHY

There are two aspects of Kashmir Shaivism i.e. theory and practice. The cardinal principles and fundamentals of theory have finally to be experienced practically by means of Sadhna. Trika system has been recognized as the highest among all the Sadhana paths that lead to self-recognition. In this system, mind is to be withdrawn from objective activities and turned towards the subject, which is the real self and is to be merged into it. Para-Praveshika by Acharya Khem Raj is a basic work explaining different tattavas mentioned in different Shiva Scriptures and gives elementary knowledge of Trika system as well. The Trika philosophy is about the triad consisting of shiva, shakti, and Nara (Jiva) or Para, Par-Apra and Apara. This concise yet remarkable book is a must—read for any aspirant who desires to learn and understand the Trika system.

Shiva is absolute reality. Shakti is the divine power of Shiva through which he conceals his nature. Her reflection through manifestation to the position of soul and world is Nara (the soul bondage, we can call it Jiva also).

Trika Philosophy involves experience of thirty-six principles or elements. Reality of one universal consciousness is manifested through these experiences. This school of thought believes in self-recognition, action and thought. For gaining positive practical experiences, the aspirants of this system should have moral and mental character of high order. Trika philosophy primarily deals with ultimate reality of the manifestation of the world process, bondage and liberation leading a devotee to realize the supreme nature of the individual soul with the eternal-principal which is nothing but Shiva alone. In other words it is the transformation of the human consciousness into divine consciousness.

Param Shiva or Shiva manifests this universe full of multiplicity and countless forms yet remains the embodiment of consciousness. His essential true nature undergoes no change.

The first movement in consciousness is called Spanda or Unmesha. From his initial throb comes the creation of the cosmos in which Shakti transform into thirty-six tattavas-the principles or constituents from Shiva to Earth. There is no difference between Shiva and Shakti. Shiva is considered the first principle and Shakti the second principle.

In Trika philosophy the universe is created, preserved and dissolved by Shiva alone. Any thing done by Him cannot be unreal. Maya cannot prevail on Shiva. The Jeeva is divine or Shiva in nature but has forgotten his real nature. The experience by which he is able to recognize his real nature and bring home the truth through spiritual discipline is known as 'Paratibijna' i.e. self-recognition, a distinct school of Trika Philosophy. The main elements of Trika Philosophy are as under:

Shiva	Shakti	Sadashiv	Ishwar	Sudvidhya
-	-	Maya	-	-
Kala	Vidhya	Rag	Kal	Niyati
Purush	Prakrati	Budhi	Ahankar	Mannah
Shruti	Tukh	Chakhu	Jiva	Gran
Vakh	Pani	Pad	Payu	Upasth
Shabad	SParash	Roop	Ras	Gandh
Akash	Vayu	Agni	Jal	Prathvi

Acharya Khem Raj has given a rational synthesis of these thirty-six principles (concrete and real mental experiences) in his Parapraveshika and the same is briefly given as under:

I. Five principles of unlimited subject-object experiences are:

1. Shiva 2. Shakti 3. Sadashiv
4. Ishwar 5. Shud-Vidya

1. **Shiva:** He is the universe in its entirety and beyond it. He is spirit, bliss, will, knowledge and action.
2. **Shakti:** The first flash comes out to draw out the universe. It is force, energy or the will to act. It is bliss, will, knowledge and action all combined.
3. **Sadashiv:** At this stage the feeling to emerge out develops into will to act. But importantly the subject-object is not differentiated. Will dominates over all other shakti's.
4. **Ishwar:** At this stage the subject actually emerges out into object, 'Ahanta' (subject) the feeling of 'I' predominates over "Identa'- the feeling of 'This'. In other words 'Knowledge'- dominates over feeling to emerge out.
5. **Shud-vidya:** At this stage Ahanta and Identa or 'I' or 'This' aspect of experience is balanced. Power of Action is predominant.

II. Creative Energy or Limited Principle:

6. **Maya:** This divine Shakti is responsible for differentiation. It makes us forget our true nature and binds us down to individuality. It eludes subject from the object through five cloaks or veils.

III. Maya's five Kanchukas- Cloaks of obscuration:

7. **Kala:** It means limited power. Shiva is omnipotent but Maya has shrunk these unlimited-powers into finite form.
8. **Vidhya:** Shiva is omniscient. But Maya has put it into limitation. So it is limited knowledge.

9. **Rag:** Shiva is full and complete, but again, Maya has put it into bondage. So there is attachment to sense objects.
10. **Kal:** Time limitation- past, present and future. Shiva is eternal. There is no bondage or limitations of time to Him.
11. **Niyati:** Limitation with regard to space. Shiva is omnipresent or all pervading but here it has its own limits as Jiva.

IV. Five limited individual experiences:

12. **Purusha:** The concept of individual five cloaks of obscurations conceal the quality of the Purusha from Shiva - (the universal consciousness).
13. **Prakrati:** It consists of Gunas i.e. qualities of Sattav, Rajas and Tamas. It is different for different Purushas and is responsible for differences in the temperament of different individuals.
14. **Budhi** is the intellect, which makes Purusha behave, doubt, reflect, think and consider.
15. **Ahankar** is responsible for will, thought-differentiation and acts as storehouse of thoughts and feelings.
16. **Mannah** is responsible for will, thought-differentiation and storehouse of thoughts and feelings.

Budhi, Ahankar and Mannah are together called as Antahkarnas.

V. Five sense organs (Jnan Indrias) :

17. Shruti
18. Tvakh
19. Chakhshu
20. Jiva
21. Gran

Vi. Five organs of action: (Karam Indrias):

22. Vakh
23. Pani
24. Pad
25. Payu
26. Upasth

Gateways:
Tongue (Speech) Hand Feet Urethra Anus

These organs have no functions other than to receive pulsation or vibration of five elements of sense perception.

VII. Five objects of perception (Tanmatr):
27. Shabad 28. Spursh 29. Roop
30. Ras 31. Gandh
Gateways through which these are perceived:
Ear Skin Eyes
Tongue Nose Sound
Touch Form Taste Smell
These are also called elements of sense perception

VIII. Five gross elements (Maha Boot) :
32. Akash (Space) – Channel for force to act.
33. Vayu (Air) – Gaseous state which sustains life.
34. Agni (Fire) – Thermal motion- heat, light and life.
35. Jal (Liquid) – Forms life.
36. Prathvi (Earth) – Sustains everything.

One of the Sutras explains to us "Life is consciousness" (Shiv Sustras 1-1) Consciousness is all pervasive. Shiva is complete waveless ocean of consciousness. Through His play, this universe has become Grahaka – the perceiver and Grahaya – the perceived. Again by emergence of thirty-six Tattavas – constitutive principles, the consciousness gives rise to the universe and its activities.

For purposes of understanding the practical aspect, the universe has been divided into three categories - the knower, the means of knowing and the object of knowledge - the known. These are called as Pramata, Pramana, Prameya, respectively.

Pramata, is limited individual (Jeeva) who understands the nature and activities of the universe. The universe is Prameya and its correct understanding is Pramiti. Since the universe is not different from Param–Shiva thus there are no means separate from Him, by which we can know Him. He is both the means and the end. Consciousness reveals its own nature and also gives the knowledge of the other objects. It is called Param Samvit. Through the independent power of this supreme 'I–consciousness' Param Shiva becomes 36 Tattvas and reveals seven experiences i.e.

1) Shiva – Chit – highest – the absolute.
2) Mantra Maheshwar – who has realized Sada-Shiv Tattva.
3) Mantre shwar – experient who has realized Ishwer Tattvas.
4) Mantra – experient in between Shud–Vidhya Tattva.
5) Vijnan Kala – experient in between Shud – Vidya and Maya Tattva
6) Pralyakal – Experient of the void.
7) Sakal – Limited experient dominated by Maya Tattva. Not knowing his real self.

Param Shiva or Shiva exists as the universe in its infinite powers. The five powers (Shaktis) are:

Chit Shakti: Shiva is self – luminous and wholly independent.

Anand Shakti: Shiva has ability to experience bliss with Himself without any external cause.

Ichha Shakti: Shiva can do anything in a miraculous way without opposition and with firm resolution.

Kriya Shakti: He can create objects of various forms.

Shiva with these five powers continuously performs five actions:

Creation (Shristi) = Creation of the universe
Sustenance (Sthiti) = Maintenance of the creation.
Dissolution (Sanhar) = Absorption of the creation into Himself.
Concealment (Pidhan) = State in which creation remains within Him, before being remembered or re-created.
Bestowal of grace (Anugrah) = Complete merging of the creation into the Universal Consciousness.

कणास्त्वद्दीप्तीनां रविशशि कृशंनु प्रभृतयः।
परं ब्रह्म क्षुद्रं तव नियतं आनन्द कणिका।।
शिवादि क्षिति अन्तं त्रिवलयतनोः सर्वम् उदरे।
तव आस्ते भक्तस्य स्फुरसि हृदि चित्रं भगवति।।

(**पन्चस्तवी** 5/29)

O Goddess! Among your various flashes, like the sun, the moon, fire etc. and even Great Lord is of little consequence when compared to your divine Shaktis and bliss. You are the embodiment of the whole universe from Shiva to Prathvi in three aspects (Knower, Knowledge and Known). Inspite of all this greatness still you dwell in the hearts of your devotees.

After understanding the significance and place of these 36 constituents or elements in the practical aspect of Sadhna, an aspirant reaches to the conclusion of Sauh (सौः) as explained grammatically by Acharya Kshem Raj in his book mentioned earlier. However, in a nutshell this is stated best in the following Shaloka:

चतुदर्श युतं भद्रे तिथिशान्तं समन्वितम्।
तृतीयं ब्रह्म सुश्रोणि हृदयं भैरवात्मनः।।

O goddess! Fourteenth alphabet i.e. औ when joined with अः and स at the end, it becomes सौः this way it represents the Shakti Bairva of Jeeva.

SWAMI VIDHYADHAR JI MAHARAJ (A PROFILE)

Shree Swami Ramji who was Shiva incarnate was introduced and initiated in Trika Philosophy by his uncle Shri Ishwar Swamipad. It is also widely believed that he was also taught by a famous mystic Manakak Monga. There are numerous accounts of miracles performed by Swami Ramji. He was a perfect Siddha (realised soul) and a scholar. He took upon himself the task of reviving and spreading Shaivisim in Kashmir in the present times and his work is unparalleled.

One of the three chief disciples of Swami Ramji was Swami Vidhyadhar Ji Maharaj, who by virtue of unflinching devotion to his guru had mastered the theoretical as well as the practical aspects of Trika Philosophy.

CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY TRADITIONS:

Swami Vidhyadhar Ji Maharaj was born in a Brahmin family of Shri Gankak Rajanak Khunmushi of Sathu Barbarashah, Srinager. The name of his mother was Harmali. Swami Ji was born in the month of Har (June) 1942 Vikrami corresponding to 1885 A.D. At the tender age of six years his father passed away. After that Swami Ji remained under the guidance of his elder brother Shri Gopinathji.

As per the family tradition Swami Ji received his elementary education at his home. He was taught Karam Kand by Shri Madav Ji Chander and Sh. Rajkak Ganz. It was at a Govt. Pathshala that he studied Sanskrit. His interest and concentration in his studies was said to be extraordinary.

When Swamiji was fifteen years old he was married to Smt. Padmavati, daughter of Sh. Reshikak Kaloo, who belonged to a reputed Brahman family. Guru Mata (as Smt. Padmavati was called) was a devoted housewife and revered her saint husband in the heart of her hearts. She attended her family chores while Swamiji was away in jungles and other places in search of self realization and she never ventured or disturbed her husband right upto the day he attained nirvana.

RENUCIATION:

Swamiji left his home when he was very young. After staying at Thjiwara Bijbehara for some days, he went to Tral where he in the solicitude of Kamala ban forest meditated for some time. Soon after he received a letter from Shri Swami Mahtab Kakaji, the elder disciple of Shri Swami Ramji asking him to return to his home. Obeying the orders of his elder (brother disciple) he returned to his home and continued to live there for one full year. He always remained in solicitude and in meditation almost all the time. His dispassionate disposition became more strong and unyielding. It is said that his spiritual concentration was so intense that he usually remained unaware of his own body.

One day when he was explaining some difficult verses (Shaloka) to a devotee, some thing struck his mind and he left his home never to return again. He went straight to Tral and then to Shopian, Bijbehara, Kathsu etc. During his these wanderings he inculcated the practice of chanting of Bhajan kirtan among the simple village folk. Bhajans dedicated to Lord Shiva formed the main theme of these Kirtans. During such Bhajan chantings he would often go into the state of Samadhi.

SAMADHI IN ISOLATED PLACES:

Swamiji's inclination towards mundane matters gradually diminished and he would prefer to remain aloof. He developed aversion for worldly pleasures and lived a saintly life. Accordingly, he went to Karkotnag (a sacred place in the dense forests of Vailnagbal near viliage Salia adjacent to Anantnag – Pahalgam road). One day Swami Ji went to the residence of Late Sh. Prasad Joo Salia (a local land lord), where some people were playing cards. While watching the game of cards, Swamiji concentrated on the significance of ONE (ACE), which is always considered superior to other cards. Swamiji was not aware of the tricks of the game, but learnt that one-ness i.e. undifferentiated reality is not only precious but supreme. "Why am I seeking help when I have resolved to resign myself to Him", he thought. With this realization of the supreme reality Swamiji reached Karkotnag Spring. He stayed there for a long time often going into his Samadhi under the open sky. The grace of God always follows such noble and divine souls like a shadow. Swami ji remained without food for many days. One day a Gujjar passed that way and explained to Swami ji the dangers inherent in staying in that dense jungle due to the presence of wild creatures and also about the dearth of food and eatables in that area. Swamiji did not budge an inch and continued to stay there. After seeing unflinching resolve of Swamiji, the Gujjar started sending some milk to him daily. Soon the Gujjar found his cows yielding more milk than before. His devotion for Swamiji slowly developed by everyday and became stronger. It was through this Gujjar that Swamiji's fame spread far and wide. Shri Prasad Joo Razdan Salia constructed a small hut for Swamiji and arranged to send some food to him. Swami ji stayed there for many days and achieved much in his spiritual activity.

From here Swamiji went to various scenic places where meditation remained his main aim. He went to Guddar Valley via Kulgam and stayed in the jungle far from the village habitation. Having attained the highest spiritual state, Swami ji always used to be absorbed in meditation.

At Srinagar Swamiji would usually stay with Dr. Srikanth a renowned medical practitioner of the city. tireless service rendered by Dr. Srikanth won his heart and Dr. Srikanth was showered with special grace by Swamiji. Dr. Srikanth being his eldest disciple was fortunate enough to have learnt different Shaiva Scriptures from Swamiji.

Swamiji had a special reverence for Kher Bhawani, the Sacred Tirth. He would usually say that the tranquil atmosphere of Kher Bhawani Tirth bestows upon the seeker that we cannot get anywhere else. Swami ji would spend major part of the year at this sacred place.

Once Swamiji reached Shri Amarnath cave (on Ashad Purnima 1972 Vikrami) with some of his devotees. After having darshan these devotees returned next day but Swamiji chose to stay in the cave for some more days. He got himself absorbed in meditation there for full one month without caring for the severe cold and the snow all around. There being no possibility of preparing meals without some prior arrangement, it was later on learnt that Swamiji made some tea only and nothing else during his one month stay in the cave. On Raksha Bandan day when pilgrims came to the cave they were astonished to see Swamiji there alone. They bowed to him with reverence. On his return from the cave, Swamiji stayed at Tral for some days and then returned to Srinagar where he stayed with Pt. Anand Joo Hashia, who was one of the devoted disciples of Swamiji. It is said that after his return from Shri Amarnath cave, Swamiji was more graceful and his speech was eloquent and he would remain mostly silent unless otherwise persuaded to recite some teachings from Shaive scriptures.

SACRED SPOTS ASSOCIATED WITH SWAMI JI:

1. KAPAL MOCHAN SHOPIAN:

Kapal Mochan, situated at Shopian (Nagbal) across Ramb Ara stream was one of the attractions for Swamiji where he spent a long time in meditation. He inspired Hindu population of Shopian town and got this shrine renovated. From there he went to the sacred lake of Konsarnag also called Vishnupad.

2. MANZGAM:

Swamiji stayed at Manzgam near Kulgam where the sacred shrine of Goddess Ragnya is situated. It is here that Swamiji composed Ragnaya Stuti which starts with "Ragini Sadha Bhagwati Bavtu Prasanna". This famous hymn is highly popular among Kashmiri Pandits. The hymn describes in a lucid way the myriad moods of Swamiji through which he describes and praises the goddess.

This place was a dense jungle then and wild animals roamed about that place. Swamiji felt delighted in their company.

3. AT TRAL:

Swamiji would usually go to Tral (Kamla-Ban). One evening, Swamiji asked Tarawati (a staunch devotee of Swamiji) to bring some stale cooked rice and curd mixed with chilli chutney. She was stunned to hear it for Swamiji took meals only once during the day. And how could she provide a stale meal to him? However, she had to comply and soon arrived with a pot full of stale rice and curd and chutney mixed together. Swamiji asked her that unless she rebuked him and asked him to take the rice immediately, he would not take it. "Do this as a mother rebukes her child when the latter refuses/resists to take food." She was thus ordered by Swamiji. Smt. Tarawati had no other option but to comply with the same. Apparently Swamiji found a glimpse of his mother in Tarawati and enjoyed an incident of his childhood, when his mother had rebuked him likewise. During his thirteen months of Mounvrat (observance of silence) Swamiji took only a little milk.

PILGRIMAGE TO VARIOUS OTHER PLACES:

Swamiji undertook pilgrimage to Kooti Tirth, Gosain Teng, in Baramulla. He also stayed in a hut at Pukhribal Hari Parbat, Srinagar. He went to Jalandher with one of his devotees. After spending sometime there, Swamiji returned and stayed in Thagpahari (Rainawari) Srinagar. At these places people flocked to visit Swamiji, where hymns would be recited and Shaiva Scriptures taught.

Once in Thagpari a visit to Dal Lake was chalked out i.e., on 31st Asad 1988 (v) but Swamiji would not give his nod. He was reluctant. The programme was finally cancelled and instead Swamiji went to Dr. Srikant's house in the city. It was subsequently known that an epidemic of cholera had broken out in the entire valley the same day.

The same year Swamiji went to Khunmoh. During his stay there he took only potatoes and milk. From here he went to Harishwar Mahadev on a pilgrimage. Then after returning to Srinagar with some devotees, he went on Sharada Peeth Pilgrimage. Next year Swamiji went to Haridawar with his cherished disciple Swami Mahadev Kak of Ratnipora. He spent considerable time in meditation on the bank of the Ganga.

Swamiji with some of his disciples went to Mahadev (near famous Dacchigam Wildlife Park). Though the climb to its top was very difficult and hazardous, Swamiji managed to reach the top. The sky was overcast with dense clouds. The disciples apprehended some rain storm. Swamiji took off his clothes and in a loud voice he recited Bairav Stotra. The clouds vanished and the Sun shone again. Swamiji with this selected group of disciples enjoyed the nectar of bliss for which they had undertaken the pilgrimage.

SOCIAL UPLIFTMENT:

One of the segments of Kashmiri Pandit community, though very insignificant in number known as Leji-Battas, had suffered at the hands of invaders. The community would usually shun them. Swamiji understood their plight and suggested them to perform a Yagna and invited all the intellectuals of the valley to participate in the Brahmbhoj (community religious feast). Swamiji took the lead and all the intellectuals, academicians and the elite of the K.P. community of the time attended the congregation. These marginalised people (so called Leji Battas) served them with full faith and devotion. After that they were welcomed within the community fold without any further reservations.

ESTABLISHMENT OF ASHRAM:

It may be recalled that because of his independent nature Swamiji was totally averse to build any Ashram. The Ashram at Karan Nager, Srinagar was established after a great deal of persuation by the devotees. Swamiji allowed it, on the explicit condition that the same will not impede his free movement. All the same Swamiji spent much time in Tral, Kher Bhawani and other places despite his physical indisposition.

LAST DAYS OF HIS LIFE:

In the year (1943 Bikrimi) one day Swamiji spoke to his three disciples about the unpredictability of death. He talked about the topic for sometime. Devotees were stunned to hear it and wondered why such an idea should have come to his mind.

In Sep-Oct the same year Swamiji returned from Tral of his own without any persuation from Srinagar devotees. At the time of departure from Tral he explained to his devotee namely Shrimati Tarawati, "You have faced many difficulties on account of me, kindly forgive me, you will have to come down to Srinagar soon. Remember to spend rest of your life like this ascetic and a virtuous woman". Tears trickled from her eyes but she could not understand what actually Swamiji meant.

On reaching Srinagar, one of his devotees enquired as to how he had come to Srinagar without giving any prior information. To this Swami ji replied, "I do not want that devotees in Srinagar should roam from pillar to post for me". This reply could not be understood by them. However, he had hinted about his last journey but no body could understand fully.

On Sunday the Amavasi of Margshira month of the same year Swamiji took his meal at 12.00 O'clock. It was perhaps the first time that he ate all his food. He had of course, some hypertension problem. He attended all the discourses and Bhajan kirtan. In the evening the devotees left for their homes. Only three persons stayed there for the night. Till late in the evening he narrated many episodes/ experiences of his life. He further said that it was better to leave this mortal frame because of the changing times. He asked for the position of the stars for the next three days. The devotees gave the details. Swamiji laughed. He went towards the door and stayed there. Devotees who were present felt that Swamiji was feeling uneasy. They laid him down on his bed. Dr. Srikanthji came, he gave some medicine. During the whole night uneasiness increased and Swamiji chose to remain silent. He did not utter any word. Next day, all the devotees reached the Ashram. Prominent doctors were called and different types of medicines were tried but to no avail. For full one or two days his condition did not improve. Despite his severe illness he wore usual brilliance on his face. During all this time Prayers, Bhajans, Aarties and different hymns were recited. On the 3rd day from the dawn itself indications of Swamiji's leaving the mortal frame became visible. Bairav Stuti written by great Abhinav Gupt was recited. No sooner did this Aarati finish than Swami ji opened his eyes and breathed his last. His age at that time was 64 years.

In the morning this news broke out in the city like wild fire, and all the devotees, men and women in thousands reached the Ashram. At 1.30 p.m. Swamiji's funeral procession started. It took full 2 hours for it to reach the cremation ground though it was only half a kilometer away from the Ashram. However it reached there at 4 p.m. and the funeral pyre was lit thereafter. Everybody and especially his devotees were crying at the passing away of their revered Guru.

SWAMIJI VIDHYADHAR TRUST:

After Swamiji's nirvan, a trust was constituted under the chairmanship of Dr. Srikanthji and accordingly it was decided to perform Swamiji's jayanti, Pitrapakh Jug (Shradha) and Nivaran Jug (Shradha) on due dates at his Ashram at Karan Nagar, Srinagar. After the forced migration of Pandits to Jammu these annual ceremonies are being religiously held at the recently constructed Shri Swami Vadhyadhar Shaiv Ashram at Paloura, Jammu.

Swamiji was a learned person who was a spontaneous source of non-dual Philosophy. Constant meditation had inculcated in him serenity and he was a seer of high order. He would usually remain engrossed in penance. His radiance both physical and mental would make a person bow at his feet and obtain blessings.

He was, as a matter of fact, Shiva incarnate and Shri Swami Ramji's favourite disciple. Swamiji would never lose any chance to help the down-trodden and deserving even at the cost of his comfort. Many a time it happened that he offered his own clothes that he wore to the needy. Many times devotees would offer him costly clothes particularly on his birthdays. He would instantly distribute them to the needy and would never keep them for himself. After abandoning his home he never touched money. At Tullamulla once a business tycoon offered him a handsome amount. Swamiji refused it. Similarly at Shri Amarnathji cave, an English tourist offered him some money, clothes, gold and cigarettes; Swamiji distributed these to the people who accompanied the tourist.

He had no material ambition whatsoever. He even regarded the construction of Ashram as one of the bondages but agreed to have it on the request of some ardent devotees. He didnot look after his wife after abandoning his home and treated every woman as his mother.

Absence of worldly desires or passions was visible from Swamiji minutest human activities. Indifference to this world was one of the principles of his Sadhna. His eldest son died in the prime of his youth. On hearing it, Swamiji was not disturbed even a bit. He simply laughed after looking towards his audience who were present there.

Swamiji was a disciplined follower of daily rituals and would never miss to observe his daily routine as directed by the Shastras. Apart from Shaivism he had full command on other philosophies like Vedanta etc. He would always emphasise that difference is in the part of practice/experience only, otherwise all the roads lead to self realisation i.e. supreme consciousness.

Non-dual path was fully practised by Swamiji.

Because of this he could stay in isolated places, in jungles and in dangerous caves and places where wild animals roamed frequently. In Karkotnag, wild bears and snakes would pass by him. In Manzgam (Kulgam) a bear was on an apple tree dropping apples; Swamiji collected the dropped apples and returned to the hut. In Kamlaban forest near Tral Swamiji was in deep meditation during the night. Next morning Swamiji found a big snake under his Phiarn and Swamiji asked the snake "did you feel comfortable to sleep with me for the whole night?" In Parimahal Swamiji stayed for several days without any fear of snakes and reptiles. These and similar other instances are testimony to the fact that Swamiji had overcome duality and perceived every form of life as one.

Swamiji would never waste time; instead he meditated quite often. "Udhyamo Bharava" (Elevation of consciousness is Shiva) was his watch word for both worldly and spiritual functions. Swamiji would love to prolong his stay for purposes of meditation, in the clear, clean, silent, attractive atmosphere/environment. He would enjoy Nature's beauty, chirping of birds and their musical notes.

Swamiji also loved to hear music. For this purpose Shri Sham Lal Kotwal would usually play and sing on Santoor for him. Though Swamiji was not conversant with Persian language, yet he understood those songs and explained their meaning to others.

Swamiji would treat everybody alike, whether or not known to him. Usually people would come to get themselves enlightened as far as spiritual problems were concerned. He would reply and explain to the satisfaction of the aspirants.

Swamiji's love for children was also unique. He would play with children and one would often get surprised when Swamiji himself would act like a child. Swamiji was an eloquent orator. His skill of expression was so alluring that listeners would forget themselves while listening to him.

Swamiji was not interested in publicity. There are many stories recounted about the miracles he performed during his life time.

The life history of illustrious Swamiji was one of the pioneering and practical illustrations of virtue for the mankind in general and Hindu community in particular. In the attainment of perfection in non-dualistic Shaivite system his name will remain an everlasting guiding factor.

Swamiji wrote beautiful verses in Sanskrit. His verses are masterpieces and could not have been written without divine grace. The works written by Swamiji which are existent at present are:-

1) Guru Stuti : Hymn in the praise of his Preceptor Swami Shri Ram Ji.
2) Nirvana Vilap : Philosophical lyrics.
3) Raginya Stuti : Philosophical hymn to Goddess Raginya which is highly popular in Kashmir and elsewhere.
4) Kalika Stuti : Hymn to Goddess Kalika.
5) Saraswati Stuti : Philosophical hymn to Goddess Saraswati. (Composed during pilgrimage to Sharda Temple, now in POK).

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SWAMI MAHADEV KAK—A PROFILE

Kashmir, which was earlier called 'Reshiwar' (the abode of Rishis) has given birth to various Saints/Sadhus from time to time. Among them was one Mahadev Kak, who hailed from a small hamlet, Ratnipora in District Pulwama. There lived a humble Kashmiri Pandit born in a religiously advanced Brahmin family. His youngest son, Mahadev, was born on Jesht Purnima in 1949-Bikrami (11th June, 1892). His mother's name was Sukh Devi. From the very childhood Mahadev was brilliant and handsome. He got enrolled in a pathshalla of the village at the age of 4 years, where Persian was the medium of instructions. His teacher was very worthy in his profession and he taught Sanskrit in Sharda script to the boy. The teacher's oral instructions regarding 'Sanatan Dharam' got imprinted on the mind of the child which later on developed in full measure and carried this boy to great heights spiritually. He had a disciplined religious life. His quest for further studies kept him mentally restless.

During those times Urdu became state language. There was no school nearby where the language could be taught. However, a boy in the neighbouring school got himself acquainted with the Urdu script from his maternal uncle. The boy, Mahadev, learnt Urdu from him. After that he somehow managed to purchase some Urdu books and got mastery over the Urdu language.

After a few years Settlement of Land Record had begun in the village and he got a job in Anantnag Tehsil at Rs.6/- a month. Because of his honesty, punctuality and dedication to duty, he remained always in the good books of his superiors. He was posted in Brijbehara where he studied Sanskrit text of Shrimad Bhagwad Gita from a learned Brahmin. He was impressed by the teaching of Shrimad Bhagwad Gita how to remain un-attached while attending to worldly affairs.

By this time Mahadev had reached marriageable age, but he refused to marry, thinking that since everything was perishable so why not to elevate oneself spiritually instead of getting fettered by the worldly affairs. He chose to remain a bachelor throughout his life.

Some time later Mahadev was transferred to Muzafarabad, but as good luck would have it, he came into contact with Swami Vidhyadharji in the year 1980 (Vikrami) i.e. 1923 A.D. who initiated him into Shaiva Darshana. Thereafter Mahadev remained associated with Swami Vidyadhar Ji all his life. Mahadev did not renounce the world but instead became a complete Grahasti Saniyasi. Trika Darshan attracted Mahadev so much that he confined himself to the study of various religious scriptures. He remained for most of the time in association with his preceptor. Also He went on pilgrimage with him to Haridwar and snatched enough time to learn practical Sadhna from his Guru.

There is no denying the fact that he got mastery in 'Yog Abhyas'. Once he expressed his wish to his Guru to renounce the world and become a Saniyasi. Guru Dev did not allow it instead advised him to practise mental renunciation and bring up the offsprings of his brother. "It is better to live a detached home life than to wander from pillar to post and from home to home to feed your self", he was told.

Since Shri Mahadevji was already working on the post of Patwari, he worked with new zeal hence forth. This was the day when his inclination developed to bring up the whole family of his brother. He himself remained a Bramchari but all along he served his Guru and invited him occasionally to his home to get his blessings. In 1982 (vik) i.e. 1925 A.D. he was bestowed with his Guru's grace and after that. he served the Guru without any interruption and both went to Haridwar where Mahadev Kak Ji received special attention of his Guru which resulted in his attaining self-realization. Here after he was conferred the title of Swami by his revered Guru.

In 2008 (Vik) i.e. 1951 A.D. Swami Mahadev Kak retried from Govt. Service. He discharged all the duties which he was entrusted by his Guru. On Marg purnima 2008 (vik) Swamiji left his ancestral house and began to live in his hut in his village like a hermit. He first started his penance by Maun Vrat (Vow of silence) of 40 days which was extended to another forty days and then further to one year. After one year a Yagya was performed in which all his brother disciples were invited and thus began another phase of penance. Swamiji snatched an opportunity to have his Vimarsh Sadhana at shri Jwalaji temple Khrew for 40 days where deadly snakes were common. One evening a reptile entered his room whose hissing sound disturbed the penance of Mahatmaji. The reptile was thrown out by a servant of the temple and Swamiji continued with his Sadhana peacefully. Swamiji would spend his winter months in the home of late R.C. Wantoo at New Delhi where many devotees would also throng for Satsang and his darshan. Swamiji had a wonderful taste for poetry and composed particularly in Kashmiri and Persian language. His poems reflect that he had tasted the Ananda of self-realisation. On 3rd Nov. 1973 on Saturday, Swamiji went in a deep trance and in this state he left his mortal frame to merge with the Supreme. On the

13th day a big havan was performed by his disciples in his Ratnipora Ashram. The practice continued every year till our exodus in the year 1990. After that the annual Shradha continued to be performed in Jammu. An Ashram was established in Palora, Jammu, in the year 2000 in the style of Swami Vidhyadhar Swami Mahadev Shiv Ashram. This Ashram is functioning even till date where yagnas of Swami Vidhyadharji, Swami Mahadev Kakji, Swami Dr. Sri Kanthji are performed annually with all the devotion by their devotees.

On every Sunday, devotional discourses, recitation of hymns, Puja Archna, study of Shaiva scriptures are held. It is worth mentioning that knowledge, penance, mental renunciation, devotion to his Guru and helping others made Swamiji popular and an elevated soul. We bow at his feet and seek his blessings and grace.

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BIMBA PRATIBIMBA - DOCTRINE OF REFLECTION

Bimba Pratibimba is one of the most wonderful principles of Shaivism. The universe is reflected in Parmeshwar who is Sat-Chit-Anand. Bimba infact is Pratibimba, the object and its reflection are identical. Shiva is the world and the world is in Shiva. Shiva and the world are not two but one. (शिवतामयं जगत्) The principle of Bimba is true knowledge.

निरमलं मुकरं यद्वत् भान्ति भूमिजलादयः।
आमिश्रास्तवत् एकस्मिन चिन्मात्रे विश्व वृतयः।।

Just as water, the earth, etc. are reflected in a clean mirror without intermingling, in the same way the entire world is reflected in one God an embodiment of consciousness. The world, which we experience, is conglomeration of five elements. The human body is an epitome of objectification of the universe composed of the five elements and all objects of the world have sprung from them. If we keenly refer to the elements described in Acharya Khem Raj's Para Preveshka we find these five elements referred to as space, air, fire, water, earth. These elements have five qualities viz. sound, touch, form, taste and smell. Every material object has these five qualities. A person has five senses to perceive and to reflect the corresponding qualities. Sound is reflected in the ears, touch in the skin, form in the eyes, taste in the tongue and smell in the nose.

However, the senses do not have the power to perceive them independently. For this senses need the help of the four psychic instruments and as well as of the Chit Shakti. As the strength of the senses increases, the objects are reflected and perceived more clearly and in finer detail. Yogis feel and perceive their finer qualities through "Sadhna". They have thus sharper and clearer senses of perception.

A reflection appears in a mirror or on a clear surface. The mirror and the object reflected in it are different from each other although they do not appear to be so. Whatever the size of the mirror the reflection does not undergo any change, its size remains the same. Moreover, even if many objects are reflected in a mirror, they do not intermingle with one another e.g. fire and cotton may be reflected simultaneously in the same mirror, similarly cow and lion are reflected in the same mirror, the cow is not afraid of the lion and the latter does not attack the former. So they do not intermingle with one another. The cleaner the mirror or say the surface is, the clearer the reflection will be.

Importantly, if something is to be reflected, there must be an object, and that object must have a form.

We see our face in a mirror but we cannot see the mirror in our face. Therefore, we can say that the face lacks the clarity to reflect. This is the case with the relationship between the external world and God. God revealed the world but the world couldn't reveal God.

Therefore, we reach to the conclusion that the clearer our heart becomes the brighter will be the reflection of Shiva. In the case of mirror, there is an external object that is reflected, and in the case of universal consciousness/ Parmeshvera, it is its own ideation that is reflected. In the case of the mirror there is external light due to which reflection is possible but in the case of universal consciousness it has its own light, it does not require any external light. It is the light of all lights.

Moreover, the mirror being non-consciousness does not know the reflection within itself. On the contrary the universal consciousness is self-conscious.

Acharaya Yog Raja Analyses this in Parmarthsara as :

अन्तर्विभाति सकलं जगदात्मनीह।
यद्वत् विचत्र रचना मुकरान्तराले।।
बोध: पुनर्निज विमर्शन सार युक्तया।
विश्वं परामुशति नो मकुरस्तथा।।

Just as a variety of objects appear, within a mirror, even so the entire universe appears within consciousness or the self consciousness owing to its Vimarsha or self consciousness knows the world, but in the case of the mirror it does not know its objects.

When we use the energy of an object and its reflection, we speak of a mirror as the basis of the reflection; that which is being reflected is separate from the mirror; but when it is seen, it is called a reflection. Thus three things are involved, an object, its reflection and a mirror. When applied to God and the Universe there are not three separate entities. Shiva or consciousness is all the three – the object, the reflecting instrument, and the reflection. Shiva is the object and the universe is His reflection.

The pain and pleasure, which arise in our lives, are experienced in two ways. One through inner remembrance and another through the perception of outer objects. This is the result of the vibration produced by our sensory perceptions. This pain and pleasure are reflections of some of the five qualities of the elements. These reflections cause a vibration in our sensory perception, which in turn produces involvements such as anger and desire. Once these tendencies merge into our Chitti, there is no longer any experience of pain and pleasure. An enlightened being does not become attached to momentary pain and pleasure. He thus realises that they are merely reflections.

मत्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्ण सुख दुखदाः।
आगमापयिनीऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत।।

Bhagwad Gita II – 14 O, Son of Kunti, the contacts of the senses with their objects, which cause heat and cold, pleasure and pain, have a beginning and an end. They are impairment. Endure them bravely, O Arjuna.

Every thing that we know is simply a reflection. Whether it is an inner experience or the perception of outer objects, it cannot be anything other than a reflection. By contemplating these reflections, which are the source of duality, we understand the differences between them and the experience of our true nature, which leads to all pervasive unity. The understanding of the principle of Bimba Pratibimba is very helpful in attaining this experience. Through it we learn to reject reflections, which are the cause of pain. When we have firm faith that the universe is a reflection into Chitti and attachment and aversion disappear into consciousness. Then we attain the bliss of consciousness.

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SHRIMAT BHAGWAD GITA
A BRIEF STUDY

In essence the purpose and doctrine of Vedanta is the cessation of all pain and attainment of bliss.

What is the root cause of all pain? अज्ञान प्रभव सर्वम् Ignorance is the root cause of all suffering. It is also the forgetfulness of ones own self. The predicament of a human being is that he has forgotten himself. He thinks about others and uselessly indulges in envy and criticising others. Ignorance is utter darkness. Unless a person experiences transcendence, he cannot find perfect contentment.

Brahman, or consciousness, appears as the mind, senses, and other principles. Gunas do not define Brahman but they are reflected in Him. The Gunas are under the control of the Supreme Reality and carry out their respective functions in the form of senses. Brahman or the supreme principle is the light of all lights. That light came to us in the form of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna does not represent conversion of Godhead into flesh but he represents turning of manhood into God. The divine form (Pursha) and matter (Prakriti) belong to one spiritual eternity. Man is inclined to turn towards objects of the world instead of directing his mind to the Creator. So, our senses turn to outward objects, which get us enslaved and alienated with the result that we become full of sufferings.

The Gita says that the Real is the Absolute Brahman.

The aim of the Gita is not so much to teach the theory as to enforce practice of Dharma. Dharma is what promotes worldly prosperities and spiritual freedom. Instead of rejecting the duties and relationship of life, the Gita accepts them as opportunities for the total realisation of life itself.

Dharmakhetra Karukshetra suggests that life is a battle, the war against the spirit of evil. Acharya Abhinav Gupt preaches in his Gita Sangraha that Karukshetra is one's senses. Dharmakhetra is one's body. It is the body where attachment, renunciation, anger, forgiveness etc. are the elements of warfare. So, these elements get together or arrayed against each other. Mamka (said by King Dhatrashtra) means 'my people'. This 'mine' is the result of ego, which is the source of evil Sankalpas and Pandavas are the virtuous Sankalpas.

In the Bhagwad Gita, the Lord does not advise Arjuna to discard bad desires and keep on good desires. He preaches Arjuna to discard all desires. When having renounced all Sankalpas one does not get attached to sense objects and actions, then alone he is said to have attained Yoga (6/4). One should abandon without reservations all desires born of Sankalpas and curb all senses from all sides through mind control (6/24). In Shaloka 2/73 Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that he who abandons all desires and frees himself from longings without any sense of "mine" or egotism attains real peace. Acharya Abhinava Gupt in its Sangrah Shaluka in chapter II has beautifully described that the trends and modes of one's mind are astonishing, while abandoning all desires one enjoys them mentally and while enjoying the pleasures and desires he abandons them mentally.

As per Upinashads, the human mind is of two kinds—Pure and Impure. That which is intent on securing its desires is impure. That which is free from attachment to desires is pure. In Buddhism, it is said that Health is the greatest gain, contentment is the greatest wealth, Faith is the best friend and Nirwana (Moksha) is the highest happiness. So, a Yogi attaining the wisdom of Supreme liberation lives a life of disinterested service.

Arjun puts a question to Lord Krishna that if he thinks that knowledge is superior to action then why is he being engaged in odious activity of war against his own people. If the method of gaining wisdom is superior, then action is also irrelevant. In chapter III/4 Lord Krishna says that we are bound to the results of our actions. Every action has its natural reaction and so is the source of bondage which prevents its union with the Supreme. What is demanded is not renunciation of work but renunciation of selfish desires.

Acharya Abhinav Gupt in its Sangreh Shakula chapter III says –A person who regards his wealth, wife, even his own body different from his soul such a person will never be affected by the currents of anger, despair and desires. In brief this is known as Yoga of Action.

Our nature is such that we want some engagement. A child may commit mischief, but he cannot refrain from mischief unless he is given some job to do. When he is given some toys, his attention is diverted and his mischievous activities stop. We are like mischievous children, therefore, we must have spiritual engagement. Simply understanding that we are spirit or soul will not help. Understanding that we are spirit we have to sustain that spirit by spiritual engagements.

We should understand when Lord Krishna is speaking to Arjuna in the Bhagwad Gita, he is not speaking simply to Arjuna alone but to the whole human race.

It is therefore absolutely necessary that we seek knowledge and the perfection of knowledge is to understand the Bhagwad Gita. We have to understand that whatever exists in the world was not produced by any human being but everything was created by God.

Dr. Radhakrishanan, (ex President of India) has summed it up like this, "The teaching of Gita is Yoga and the teacher is Yogeshawra. When the human soul becomes enlightened and united with the Divine, fortune and victory, welfare and morality are assured.... The double purpose of Human life, personal perfection and indicated social efficiency is here. Human perfection was a sort of marriage between high thought and just action. This according to the Gita must be for ever, the aim of man."

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ESSENCE OF THE BHAGWAD GITA – II

There are two processes for attaining knowledge. One is inductive another is deductive. The latter is more perfect. "All men are mortal". For this premise no one needs to discuss how man is mortal. The deductive conclusion is Mr. A is a man, therefore Mr. A is mortal. Followers of the inductive method arrive at this premise through experiment and observation. Our experience is limited. Our senses have limited power as ordinary humans. Therefore it is natural that there are many .defects in our conditioned state. So, inductive process is not always perfect while as deductive knowledge is perfect. There are so many passages in the Bhagwad Gita, which appear to be dogmatic e.g. "O Conqueror of wealth (Arjun) there is no truth superior to 'Me'. Everything rests upon 'Me' as pearls are strung on a thread."(B.G. 7/7).

A man is conditioned by three 'Malas' (i.e. Imperfection, differentiation and worldly attachments) if he is the greatest of All he speaks impiously of God. But Lord Krishna can say this. Even while he was on this Earth, He was considered the greatest personality of His time and the greatest in all fields of activity. Lord Krishna is supreme personality of Godhead, which Arjuna accepted. Arjuna personally accepts the statements of Lord Krishna when the former asks (B.G.4.4), "The Sun God Vivasvan is senior by birth to you. How am I to understand that in the beginning you taught this science to him?" Lord Krishna answers it in this way, "Many births both you and I have passed. I can remember all of them, but you cannot. O' Subduer of the Enemy" (B.G. 4.5)

At the same time, he who has no personal knowledge but has only heard of many things cannot understand the meaning of the scriptures even as a spoon has no idea of the taste of the soup. We must combine devotion to the teacher with most unrestricted right of free examination and inquiry. Blind obedience to external authority is detrimental. Today there are several teachers who require their followers obedience to their command. Many simple minded people are drawn to them not so much by the spiritual powers as by the publicity of their agents. This is against the spirit advised and insisted on Jygasa or inquiry. "Learn that by humble reverence by inquiry and by service, the men of wisdom who have seen the truth will instruct thee in that knowledge". (B. G. 4/34).

Arjuna is here called upon to perform action with the help of knowledge and concentration. The doubt in his heart whether it is better to fight or abstain is the product of ignorance. Faith is necessary for wisdom as explained in Shaloka 4/39, "He who has faith and who is absorbed in it (wisdom) and who has subdued his senses gains wisdom and then attains supreme peace. Therefore Arjuna slash to pieces with the sword of wisdom, this doubt in your heart born of ignorance, establish yourself in yoga and stand up to fight" (B.G. 4/42).

Acharya Abhinava Gupt in his Sangarsh Shaloka of chapter 4 has summed up, "Whatever Karmas are performed according to the wishes of senses and following these karmas in true spirit the Shaktis of Senses would impart blessings in the shape of liberation".

Then after discussing the knowledge to be obtained substantively focus on renunciation has been given in the Bhagwad Gita Sholaka 5/7, "The karma yogi who has fully conquered his mind and mastered his senses whose heart is pure and who has identified himself with the self of all beings (viz. God) remains untainted even though performing actions."

Similarly shutting out all thoughts of external enjoyments with the gaze fixed on all space between the eyebrows having regulated Parana and Apana breath flowing within the nostrils, he who has brought his senses, mind and intellect under control such contemplated soul intent on liberation and free from desires, fear and anger is ever liberated (B.G 5/27-28). In India according to Vedic civilization a Brahman who is learned is considered to be the top-most man in human society. The Pandit who is learned and is gentle sees such Brahman on the same level. In other words he has no distinction between the highest and the lowest. The Pandit sees them as the same because he does not see the skin, but the spirit. One who has learnt the art of seeing the same spirit soul within every living being is considered to be a Pandit.

In the B.G 10/8 it is said, "And the source of all spiritual and material worlds every thing emanates from Me. The wise who knows this perfectly engages himself in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts".

The Supreme is within us and is realizable by one who is prepared to lose his life to save it. For the most part we are aware of the self in us because our attention is engaged by objects which we like and dislike. We must get away from them to become aware of the divine within us.

The Bhagwad Gita Verse 5 of chapter 6 says, " Let a man lift himself by himself, let him not degrade himself, for self alone is the friend of self and self alone is the enemy of the self."

Shri Krishna Advises Arjuna, "Arjuna should know that what they call Sanyasa is no other than Yoga, for none becomes a yogi who has not given up the thoughts of the world" B.G 6/2. There are three basic types of yoga taught in the Bhagwad Gita – Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Bakti Yoga.

The system of yoga is like a staircase which reaches to the divine through various steps. Some one may be on the first step, some may be half way up or some one may be on the top step. When one is elevated to certain levels he is known as Karm Yogi, Jnana Yogi etc. In all cases the search of the supreme Lord is same. It is a difference in elevation only. So Shri Krishna tells Arjuna that he must understand that renunciation (Sanyasa) and yoga are the same because without being free from desires and sense objects one can become neither a Yogi nor a Sanyasi. In the Bhagwad Gita 6/35 Krishna emphasizes practice and renunciation as ways to control mind.

Lord Krishna says, "O mighty armed son of Kunti, it is undoubtedly very difficult to curb the restless mind but is possible by constant practice and by detachment."

Nowadays it is hardly possible for us to renounce anything for we are involved in a variety of material sense pleasures. Despite leading a life of uncontrolled indulgence in senses we attain success. There are so many rules and regulations involved in the proper execution of yoga. Lord Krishna proclaims that yoga cannot be properly performed by one who eats too much or eats too little. Similar is the case with regard to sleep. Thus the Lord outlines so many requirements for disciplining the body to keep it fit. There are generally three basic rules i.e. no illicit sexual connection, no intoxication and follow all types of Ahinsa/truth. We have to test ourselves accordingly to ascertain our success in yoga. Apart from the above it is the duty of a yogi to remain alone, and carefully control his mind. He should be free from desires and feelings of possessiveness.

"A yogi should live in seclusion all by himself and control his mind and body and is free from desires and void of possession; it should constantly engage his mind in meditation." (B.G 6/10).

Concluding the verses on the discipline of yoga the Lord says as per B.G 6/47:-

"Of all Yogis again he who devotedly worships Me with his mind focused on Me is considered by Me to be the great devotee."

* * *

CAUSE OF BONDAGE AND LIBERATION

In all living beings when the young ones are born they naturally perform the functions that belong to their kind. Different animals differ in their ways of collecting food and each one does according to the species to which it belongs. These little ones are not directed in this by any one. From this some people contend that this knowledge is inherent within minds as a result of the impressions of past life.

According to Kashmir Shaivism there are three Mallas (or imperfection): Anavmal, Mayamal and Karmamal. In brief, Anavmal is imperfection, Mayamal is differentiation, and Karmamal is impressions left behind on the mind due to Karmas or actions.

मलमज्ञानमिच्छन्ति संसाराङ्कुर कारणम्

Mala is said to be nothing but ignorance (Anavmal) of one's real nature. This Mal is the cause (Karmamal) of Sansara (Mayamal).

As long as an individual soul is affected by Mayamal and considers the universe to be different from himself, he will remain bound. In reality this world, is the sport of Shakti in his own body. Considering the world to be other than one's ownself is the cause of bondage. Attachment and aversion, enmity and jealousy, misbehavior and other kinds of miseries arise from the idea that the knower and the known are separate. When the entire process of knowledge is analysed, it appears to possess three elements

- the knower, the known and the content of knowledge. The knowledge that we gather about an object is derived from the objective interface that we have with that object as well as the intuitive or subjective knowledge, which is already present in our experience. Therefore individual soul performs good and bad actions through the influence of misery, without analysing its true content. Impressions of old desires and fruits of actions ultimately ripen and give birth to the infinite impurities. If a person recognizes his true nature through power of pure knowledge, he becomes free. Through pure knowledge, bondage dissolves. As he is made to recognize his real self which is pure consciousness, so he is liberated.

As per Ucchusmabhairava quoted in Shiv Sutra Vimarshani by Acharya Khem Raj (1.1).

यावन्न वेदका एते तावद्वेद्याः कथं प्रिये।
वेदकं वेद्यमेकं तु तत्त्वं नास्त्यशुचिंस्ततः।।

Oh, Dear one! So long as there are no knowers, how can there be anything known. The knower and the known in reality constitute the same principle (Tattva). Therefore there is nothing which is inherently impure. In Spandkarika verse 9 this idea has been fully elucidated thus:-

निजाशुद्धया सर्मथस्य कर्तव्येष्वभिलाषिणः।
यदा क्षोभः प्रलीयेत तदा स्यात्परमं पदम्।।

When the restless condition of the mind of empirical individual who is incapacitated by his own impurity and is attached to actions disappears then he experiences the highest state.

Sutra 16 of Pratbignaya Hradyam of Acharya Khem Raj:-

चिदानन्द लाभे देहादिषु चेत्यमानेष्वपि।
चिदैकात्म्य प्रतिपत्ति दाख्यं जीवनमुक्ति।।

When the bliss of chit is attained, there is stability of consciousness of identity with chit even while the body etc.

are being experienced. This state is Mukti (Liberation) even when one is alive.

Worth mentioning is the conversation between Nichiketa (Epithet for Agni) and Yama (God of Death) as per Katha Upnishad (Katha 1.1).

God of Death pleased by the patience and humility of Nichiketa granted him three boons and having already chosen two boons, Nichiketa declined to choose the third boon anything short of the knowledge of the existence of the soul after the death of the human body.

Yama said, "All those desires which are impossible to be satisfied in this world of mortals, ask me for them if you wish. Be waited upon, I shall present you, but Nichiketa do not ask me about Death."

Nichiketa replied, "All these, Oh God of Death! are ephemeral objects and wear out the vigour of these senses. Moreover life itself would be short for their enjoyment. Keep them unto thyself. Pleasures and beauty have become a matter of doubt and inquiry. Kindly speak to me about this great secret. I need no other boon than this."

It is clear Nichiketa was not lured by the worldly comforts. Instead he insisted on the knowing the secrets i.e. knowledge of the soul after Death. When the good and pleasant present themselves before a man, the wise man chooses the good before the pleasant while the fool chooses the pleasant before the good. This is one of the paths for the wise to remain unattached and get liberated while alive.

Reason is of greater importance than action.

The B.Gita II/50 says:-

बुद्धि यक्तो जहातर्हि उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते।
तस्मात् योगाय युज्यस्व योग कर्मसु कौशलम्।।

The Unattached person gives up actions as well as vices and virtues. He does not get attached. This way unattachment leads to liberation and one must remain curious for the same.

A limited individual's experience consists of three states viz. waking, dreaming and deep sleep. His world is made of these three states corroborating to Anav, Maya and Karammalas. As long as the individual is in bondage, he identifies with the void of the state of deep sleep, the Prana (subtle body) and the physical body. Through the grace of Guru, knowledge of the scriptures, his own efforts, Bakhti (devotion) and renunciation he transcends all his ordinary experiences and feelings. With the help of Upayas, chanting of Hyms, worship, meditation, spiritual activities taught by tradition, constant practice leading to Samadi, his transformation is facilitated and consequently he is freed from the shackles of materialistic bondage. When his knowledge expands he experiences, Sat, Chit, Anand i.e. eternal, awareness and bliss of consciousness.

The Bhagwad Gita IV/35-37

यज्ज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेवं यास्यसि पाण्ड़व।
येन भूतान्यशेषेण द्रक्ष्यात्मन्यथो मयि।।
अपि चदसि पापेभ्य: सर्वेभ्य: पापकृतम।
सर्व ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं सन्तरिष्यसि।।
यथैद्यांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात क्रियतेऽर्जुन।
ज्ञानाग्नि: सर्व कर्माणि भसमात्करुते तथा।।

"When you have thus learned the truth you will know that all living beings are but parts of Me-and that they are in Me and are mine. Even if you are considered to be the most sinful of all sinners, when you are situated in the boat of transcendental knowledge, you will be able to cross over the ocean of the miseries. As a blazing fire burns firewood to ashes, Oh Arjun! So does the fire of knowledge turn to ashes all the reactions to material activities."! It is the spiritual master who ignites the fire of knowledge. When it is ablaze all the reactions to our actions are turned to ashes.

The reactions to our actions are the cause of bondage. There are good and bad actions. For him who wants to be liberated from the material bondage, the reaction of both good and bad actions are detrimental. In this world we are attached to good actions if we are situated in good modes. If we are in the modes of passion and ignorance, however, we do bad actions in passion and ignorance. But for those who strive for Supreme Consciousness there is no need of good or bad actions. By good Karmas we may get birth in a good and wealthy family. By bad karmas we may have lowly births. In both the cases birth means bondage. One who strives for Supreme Consciousness, indirectly strives for liberation from bondage of transmigration.

Our lives attain full meaning and direction only if we strive to attain the transcendental knowledge of Supreme Consciousness, known as Para Awastha परा अवस्था.

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THE DOCTRINES OF SPANDA

Shaiva Darshan or Shaiva system of philosophy in general is known as Shaiva Agama. The non-dual Shaiva system of Kashmir is known as Trika Shastra, which expounds the fundamental principles of Reality; besides, it lays down cardinal principles, rules and definitely certain norms of conduct to be observed. Trika Shastra is a triad comprising Shiva (Static aspect), Shakti (dynamic aspect) and Narah (the bound soul). At present there are three main prevalent branches of Shaiva Darsana.

a) Agma Shastra
b) Spanda Shastra
c) Pratybhijna Shastra

we have a fourth one also called Krama Shastra; but very little is known about it at present despite the huge efforts of Dr. Navjivan Rastogi. The fifth one is Kaula branch.

Agma Shastra is revelation handed down from teacher to pupil. Among other scriptures Siva Sutra come under this category.

Spanda Shastra or Spanda Karika: These elaborate the principles of Siva Sutra in verses.

Pratybhijna Shastra: This interprets the main doctrines of the system, reasoning and arguments and counter arguments.

Siva Sutra describes three upayas or means of Sadhna i.e.

1. Shambhav upaya
2. Shakti upaya
3. Anav upaya

1. Shambhav upaya in other words is also known as Ichha Shakti. "I am not different from supreme principle" has to be experienced.

Malini Vijaya Tantra Chapter II verse 23:

अकिंचित चिन्तकस्यैव गुरुणा प्रतिबोधतः।
जायते यः समावेशः शाम्भवोऽसावुदीरितः।।

Absorption in Shiva consciousness comes to one whose mind has become free from thought as a result of an awakening by Guru or through an intense spontaneous awakening.

1. Shakt upaya or Jnana upaya is the process by which the mind and intellect completely merge into the inner self.

M.V. Tantra Chapter II Verse 22:

उच्चार रहितं वस्तु चेतसैव विचिन्तयन्।
यं समावेशमाप्नोति शांक्तः सोऽत्राभिधीयते।।

When a seeker becomes totally absorbed in the true principles, which are beyond both the subtle and the articulated speech, that oneness is called Shakti Smavesha or Shakti upaya.

3. Anav upaya is called Kriya upaya, Malinin Vijaya describes Anav upaya as :

M.V. Tantra Chapter II Verse 21:

उच्चार करण ध्यान वर्णस्थान प्रकल्पनैः।
यो भवेतु समावेशः सम्यक् आणव उच्यते।।

In Anav upaya the perfect absorption into the essential divine self is achieved through methods known as ucchara, karana, dhyana, varana and sathana kalpana.

Tryambaka or Traymbakaditya was a disciple of sage Druvasa. The fifteenth disciple in the Trimbka line married a Brahmin girl and his son Sangamaditya came to Kashmir and settled here. Somananda appeared in the fourth generation from Sangamaditya. Somananda's grand disciple Rama Kantha flourished in the middle of the 9th century (Awantiverman's rule).

Somananda composed a philosophical treatise on Shaivism – the Shiva Drishti. This is the first philosophical treatise available on Kashmir Shaivism. Utpaladeva – the disciple of Somananda composed many works, out of them the most outstanding from philosophical point of view is undoubtedly Ishwara Pratyabhijna.

Laxman Gupt was the chief disciple of Utpaladeva and later his grand disciple was Abhinava Gupt in whose hand the school of philosophy attained perfection. He flourished in the 10th and 11th century of the christian era.

Khemraja – a disciple of Abhinava Gupt composed many books among them commentaries on the – Shiva Sutra (Vimershani), Spandakrika (Nirnaya and Sandhoha) Vijnana Bairava etc. are worth mentioning.

Vasu Gupta was a sage in the school of Trymbikas who discovered the Sutras of Shiva and taught these to his disciple Batta Kallata who flourished in the time of Awantivarman (9th century AD).

Battakallata composed a fine work Spandkarika. Spandkarika is a commentary on the Shiva Sutras through medium of verses. This work of fifty verses teaches the secrets of theory and practice of Shaivism as taught by Siva Sutras. Abhinav Gupt has quoted both the Sutras and the Karikas at so many places thereby accepting them as highly important works. There are following commentaries available on the Sutras and the Karikas:

a) Rama Kantha who was a disciple of Utpaladeva is the author of Spanda Vivriti – a commentary on Karikas.

b) Short commentary named Vivriti composed by Batta Kallata.
c) Utpalla Vaishnava wrote commentary on the Karikas named Pradipika.
d) Batta Baskara explained Shiv Sutras in his Shiva Sutra – Vartikam.
e) Vardhraja composed book of Vartikas on Shiva Sutra.

Shiva Sutras are the basic treatise of Kashmir Shaivism. The principles explained in the verses of Sapandkarika are based on the experience of Yogis and on the Agama Shastras (divinely revealed). Spanda Karika is divided into three chapters:

a) Svarupa Spanda stresses Nimilana Samadhi (introversive meditation). It explains supreme principle and describes how limitations have concealed our nature.
b) Sahaja Vidyodaya stresses Unmilana Samadhi (extrovertive meditation). It explains how to discriminate between that which is external and that which is not, how to remain awake to self at all times and how to attain the knowledge of ones own self.
c) Vibhuti Spanda describes supernormal powers by the realisation of Spanda. It describes the glory of Shiva and the true awareness of Him.

The following words are synonyms for Spanda or movement: Sphota = explosion, Spharana = throb, Chalana = motion, Kampana = trembling, Udyaya = arising, Unmesha = expansion, Abhasana = reflection, Nishyanda = flux and Unmilana = unfolding and vibration etc.

Vibration i.e. Spanda is that motionless motion which is present when we think or when we look at an object, it exists as a reflection inside us (on the screen of our consciousness) and when we shift our attention to other objects there is a small interval between the two thoughts. (or these two reflections).

To elucidate it more explicitly: A man attains knowledge through the sensations received by his sense organs. The mind is a blank sheet on which the sensations leave their impressions. Thus the matter of knowledge comes from outside the mind. Mind makes concepts or ideas on the basis of sensations received by it. There is another force, which motivates the senses and gives them the power to work. This conscious force in its introverted aspect is called Spanda – i.e. the inspiration coming from contact with the strength of the self. Through this contact with the Supreme – the senses obtain the ability to carry out their work. It is this contact with supreme power which is termed as Spanda Shakti. Spanda Shakti is also the grace bestowing power in Gurus who bestow Shaktipat – through their touch, look or will.

न शिवा शक्ति रहितो न शक्ति शिव वर्जिता।
उभयोरस्ति तादात्म्यं वह्नि दाह कयोर इव।।

That Spanda Shakti is not different from Shiva, because Shiva is not different from Shakti. Both Siva and Shakti refer to the same reality, just as fire and heat are not different from one another.

स स्फरता महासत्ता

This vibrating Shakti is the supreme reality.

It gives birth to every visible object that exists in the world. It even brings through imagination into being objects, which do not exist at all from the standpoint of direct perception e.g. Akash Pushp, horns on a hare etc. These are all figments of imagination. Spanda Shakti brings about limitation of time, space and form. It itself is not limited. In brief all the objects of the universe are forms of Spanda Shakti.

The nature of Spanda is the mere readiness of the Supreme who is consciousness to manifest, as the outer universe by His own will He uses His independent sovereign Shakti. The nature of His Spanda is nothing but pure 'I–consciousness'. With the same Spanda He also dissolves the universe. Spanda is the first throb, which takes place when Shakti expands. It is also defined as the five actions of Shiva, Creation (Shrasti), Sustenance (Sith:ti), Dissolution (Samhar), Concealment (Pidhan) and Bestowal of grace (Anugrah).

A period of rest occurs in Spanda when the inner 'I-consciousness' is in undifferentiated form.

Spand Karika Chapter I Verse 5:

न दुखं न सुखं यत्र न ग्राह्यं ग्राहकं न च।
न चास्ति मूढभावोऽपि तदंस्ति परमार्थतः।।

Wherein neither pain nor pleasure, nor object nor subject, exist, nor wherein does in- sentiency exist – that in the highest sense is that Spanda. It also occurs when the universe has manifested outwardly and when the universe is contemplated as 'Idem' (This). Only Spanda Shakti has the freedom and infinite power.

Spand Karika Chapter I Verse 1:

यस्योन्मेष निमेषाभ्यां जगतः प्रलयोदयौ।
तं शक्ति चक्र विभव प्रभवं शंकरं स्तुमः।।

We bow to that Siva who is fountainhead of all glory, manifests in the Shakti Cakra and at whose opening of the eye and closing of the eye the world is created and dissolved.

Ordinarily Spanda is nothing but the predominant active aspect of Vimarsha Shakti, the dynamic creative power that co-exists with Prakasha – the static aspect of Parm Shiva.

The expansion of Spanda Shakti takes two forms – general and specific, and, therefore, it has two names Samanya (सामान्य) Spanda and Vishesha (विशेषः) Spanda. In its general form it is unity in diversity. In its specific form it is diversity in unity. The general form of Spanda Shakti is the immanent subtle consciousness or Prana, which pervades all objects of the universe. In its specific form, duality predominates and Spanda Shakti turns into many unique names, forms and objects of experience.

The Spanda Shakti i.e. power of Spanda flows inwards and outwards simultaneously. This power throbs continuously without break. Scientists also believe that there was initially an explosion or pulsation when the universe began. Even today its vestiges are known as background radiation in astro-physics. This vibrating power, scientists recognize, is constantly throbbing in the universe and will continue to pulsate eternally. The world exists within us in a seed form. It is Spanda, which manifests it outwardly.

Malini – Vijaya Tantra (3/5) also says:

या सा शक्तिर्जगद्धातु कथिता समवायिनी।
इच्छा तत्त्वं तस्य सा देवी सिसृक्षो प्रतिपद्यते।।

When God's independent Shakti, which is inseparable from Him, is ready to flow out into the forms of the universe, She first takes the form of 'Iccha".

The Rigveda states that before the moment of creation, the Lord said, I am alone let me be many. As that Iccha Shakti unfolds, it manifests as Jnana Shakti and Kriya Shakti.

Shakti continuously unfolds in order to create objects and branches out in infinite forms. She expands to form the multiplicity of the universe from Shiva to the earth. Shakti through power of knowledge, flows through three paths Varna, Pada and Mantra and through power of action, she flows through the other paths of Kala, Tattva and Bhuavna. This way she assumes the form of outer universe.

It has to be noted here that the expansion of entire universe of sound takes place in form of the first three (i.e., Varna, Pada and Mantra) and the universe of matter in the form of latter three paths (Kala, Tattva, Bhuavna). Both of these come into existence through Spanda.

Through the power of Spanda an ignorant person is driven to perform actions. Even if he has spiritual longing because of the influence of Spanda he does not notice it. From one vibration, another arises, Bindu (light), Nada (sound), Rupa (form), Rasa (taste) and so on arise from Spanda.

Spand Karika Chapter III Verse 9:

एक चिन्ता प्रसक्तस्य यतः स्यादपरोदयः।
उन्मेषः सा तु विज्ञेयः स्वयं तमुपलक्षयेत्।।

The experience, which arises within us when we move from one thought and feeling to another, is called Unmesha. One should know it by looking within.

In reality the essence of knowledge takes three forms. In pain and pleasure it is dual. In experience and memories it is both dual and non dual and in the awareness of one's own self it is non-dual. It becomes manifold according to a person's individual Spanda, or vibration. Because of glory of Spanda Shakti every thing appears to be different according to its qualities, actions, shape, activities and changes.

The effect of the world of known objects (Premeya), exists in an undifferentiated form within Shiva who is the cause. This Shiva is the substratum of awareness, which is of the nature of Spand. Through Him the world manifests outwardly. Nothing can veil the true essence of the Supreme Reality.

Vigyan Bharav Verse 14:-

दिक काल कलनान्मुक्ता दशोद्देश विशेषणी।
व्यपेदेष्टुमशक्यासावकथ्या परमार्थत:।।

He is beyond limitation of direction, time and objects. He is beyond limitation of distance both near and far because he cannot be subject of either subtle or articulated speech. He is indescribable and can be experienced from within.

Shiva Sutra Chapter I Sutra 17:

वितर्क आत्म ज्ञानम्

"Unwavering awareness (that I am Shiva) constitutes the knowledge of self" this is called the state of Bhairvi, which is free from the meshes of thought and afflictions of doubt. This universe exists in an undifferentiated form as an object of knowledge within Spanda Shakti. Truly the world is the divine play of God's Supreme Bliss.

Even a mere cursory discussion of Trika Darsana (Monistic or Kashmir Shaiv Darsan) always brings joy. By granting the knowledge of the self, the perennial and practical philosophy and way of life destroys ignorance. It takes one across the ocean of the world in the boat of non-duality.

◆

THE FESTIVAL OF NIGHTS

Literal meaning of Navratris is Nav meaning Nine and Ratra meaning Nights. Each night is dedicated to different forms of Universal Mother e.g.

1. Kushmunda
2. Shailputra
3. Skand Mata
4. Chandrghanta
5. Bramcharini
6. Kalraatri
7. Kantyayni
8. Chamunda
9. Sidhidatri

Mother Goddess to whom Navratras are attributed is the epithet for Parvati – consort of Lord Shiva. When Shiva just beginning to think of manifesting (jagat) the first vibration (when the thought begins to rise in Him) is Shakti. In other words the blissful consciousness of His being everything is called Shakti.

The worship in different aspects of the supreme blissful Shakti is performed to involve cosmic energy of the Mother known as Maa Durga.

Legends:

As per Durga Saptshati there are several legends associated with mother Durga. Some of them are:-

1. When the entire universe was submerged under water Sri Vishnu was in his yoga Nidra (sleep). Two demons Madhu and Kaitabha arose out of the discharge from Lord Vishnu's ears. They threatened to kill Brahma who had been born in a lotus which blossomed from Vishnu's navel. Brahma praised Devi who was responsible for Vishnu's slumber and prayed that Sri Vishnu be roused and induced to kill the demons. There upon Sri Vishnu arose from his yoga Nidra and slayed the demons.
2. In Devi Mahatmyam it is mentioned that Mahishasur – a powerful demon had defeated the Devas and unseated Indra and other gods from their positions. The gods went to Shiva and Vishnu and prayed to them for the destruction of Mahishasur. Shiva, Vishnu and other gods invoked and pooled their energies which gave rise to Durga. She slew the terrible demon Mahashasur. In the 10th Chapter, Devi is believed to have declared that she is the only power in this world in whom all gods and their weapons merge. There is no other force different from her.
3. The demons, Shumbha and his younger brother Nisubha performed severe penance and obtained great powers from Brahma. Using these powers they harassed all the worlds and usurped the position of the gods. The latter led by Brahma and Vishnu prayed and worshipped Devi. The prayers reached Mother Parwati whose body resulted into a glow which took the form of a beautiful damsel. The damsel destroyed the troops and finally Nishumbha and Shumbha were killed. (Chapter 5 to 10 Devi Mahatymam).
4. Lord Shiva was seated on Kailash Parvat when Brahma visited him and narrated the trouble caused by the asuras. Vishnu also arrived there. From the

combination of the three, there emerged a power in the form of a woman. She divided herself into three parts Satvik, Rajas and Tamsic. These attributes entered the body of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra respectively. The latter two destroyed demon Mahisha and demon Rura (Varaha Purana).

5. Lord Krishna's grandson was Aniruda. Banasur was an asura with tremendous power gained by worshipping Shiva (Its mention is also in Mahimnastotra). Banasur began to misuse these boons. His daughter Usha fell in love with Aniruda. She managed to bring him to her palace through her maid. Banasur learnt about it. He bound Aniruda with Nagastra (weapon in the shape of a serpent). By worshipping Devi, Aniruda was freed from the grip of Nagastra. Meanwhile, Krishna learned this and killed Banasur. Usha and Anirudra were united in happy wedlock.

There are several stories of valour and victory of Maa Durga recounted in various scriptures. She assumes different forms and powers and uses several weapons each time to destroy the evil forces and to shower her grace and blessings on humanity.

Philosophical aspect:

The supreme Shakti is not different from all existing things.

Entire visible universe is the expansion of the sovereign power of Shakti. She arises in many forms. She carries out her work in all beings ceaselessly in the shape of Iccha, Jnana and Kriya.

All desires of a person exist in an un-manifest form in his sub-conscious. The Iccha Shakti knows and manifests them through her power of activity i.e. perceived by the mind. This mysterious and extra ordinary Shakti is regarded as sacred Deity. It is conscious power behind the senses which inspires the intellect and makes the mind contemplate.

Shakti is subtle vibration that arises as thoughts and feelings and then subsides into the space of heart. It is the mighty play of Shakti which gives rise to desire, greed, delusion, jealously, animity, arrogance and every form and then dissolves them.

The vital feature of Shakti is the process of inhalation and exhalation. Inhalation merges in the heart and expels it in the form of exhalation. Upon exhalation it merges with the outside world. It is again the same Shakti which draws it in again. This exhalation and inhalation causes us to live.

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VIKALP IN KASHMIR SHAVISIM

लोकवद्भवतु मे विषयेषु स्फीत एव भगवन्परिर्तषः।
केवलं तव शरीरतयैतान् लोक येयमहमस्त विकल्पः।।

O Lord! My intensity in worldly pleasure may increase like it does in a common man. But I should identify all these pleasures with You alone so that the differentiation in me is cast away. (STV-8/3).

There are various kinds of thoughts and fantasies called mental constructs. These are numberless offshoots which take birth and die instantly. So, different kinds of understanding are called Vikalpas. Vikalp is also known as differentiation; difference in perception or ideating or "this from that". Without duality there is no Vikalp. Duality generates Viklap.

द्वतीयाद वै भय भवति The Upanishads emphasise that fear is nothing but the experience of the state of otherness. As per Patanjali Yog, Vikalpa means only fancy which has no basis.

As per Kashmir Shaivism all ideas such as "I and Mine", "This and Theirs" and "I am different from others" exist because of the power of the Vikalp. If there is no thought in one's mental world that state is called Nir-Vikalp or thought free state. Shiva is free from Vikalpas but the nature of individual experient is that he perceives everything through differentiation or 'Bheda'.

A perfect Sidha or Yogi who experiences bliss of his own true nature does not give any credence to what is heard and what is seen. His mind is still like rock and wind less flame. This is Nir-Vikalp Samadhi.

Vikalpas are both positive and negative ideas. While as positive part is selective, negative part is rejective. Vikalpa is relational i.e. subject-object relationship. Reality is non-relational. There is no object outside reality. Therefore, in Vikalpa one is unable to grasp reality. When integral awareness not influenced by Maya develops, the sense of difference or Vikalp disappears.

As per Parmarthsara Verse 11:

सर्व विकल्पविहीनं शुद्धं शान्त लयोदयविहीनम्।
यत्परतत्त्वं तस्मिन् विभाति षटत्रिंशदात्म जगत्।।

"It is within Him who is Himself luminous without thought construct (difference in perception), eternal, transcendent, and blissful that the whole universe consisting of 36 principles is shining. Acharya Khem Raj in his Pratibijnya Hridayam expounds:

विकल्पक्षय - शक्ति संकोच विकास -
वाहच्छेदाद्यन्त कोटि निभालनादय इहोपाया:।

Dissolution of Vikalpa, Sankucha and Vikas of Shakti cutting of Vahas (Pran Vayu), the practice of Koti of the beginning and end (i.e. Adi Koti and Ant Koti or Hradya and Brahm Randra) is the Upaya (Sutra-18).

To elucidate it further it can be said that when a seeker keeps his individual consciousness concentrated on Samvit, restraining the Vikalpas that obstruct, staying in his own nature by not thinking of anything else thus attaining Aviklap state, he becomes used to the habit of regarding his consciousness as the real knower, he thus attains the Turya state.

(विकल्प हानेनैक ग्रयात्क्रमेणेश्वरतापदम्)

In Ishwar Pratibijnya it is said that by giving up Vikalpa and by having one pointedness of mind one gradually reaches the state of supreme consciousness. To strengthen the concept of Nir-Vikalp state mention of the views of the illustrious Saint Kapila Muni explain it thus: The diversity which we see in this world is neither permanent nor fundamental. The fundamental substance is matter or say Prakriti which has three qualities, Satv, Rajas and Tamas. These qualities are equal and when these qualities begin to vary, various things come into being. Prakriti and Pursha are fundamentally different things. One who is deluded by Maya (affected by illusion) is called Pursha. Pursha is in no way different from or inferior to Shiva, but is in a state of duality and delusion; his real self is obscured by Maya. Every thing is pure in this universe and is a manifestation of Shiva and so is Pursha. Pursha as Shiva is pure intelligence. We have to understand it. Prakrati develops into the apparatus of thought and understanding thought is Vikalpa. Because of the current of Vikalpa Shakti contracts and bondage comes into existence. In this state the power of Vikalpa is the cause of pain and pleasure, attachment and aversion. Because Vikalpa is incredibly powerful, it is the cause of limitless complications. One can count external objects around but cannot count Vikalpa. Vikalpa can be described in following three ways:

1. First group of Vikalpa enables us to carry on our daily routine in this mundane world.
2. The second group helps us to attain our true nature by understanding Para (Abheda) Para Apara (Bheda Abheda) i.e. unity in diversity and Apara (Bheda/ duality).
3. The third group is used to remove all the Vikalpas to attain thought-free state.

Acharya Uttapal Dev has summed it thus in STV (13/16):

योऽविकल्पमिदमर्थ मंड़लं पश्यतीश निखिलं भवद्वपुः।
स्वात्म पक्ष परिपूरिते जगत्यस्य नित्य सखिनः कुतो भयम्।।

"O My Lord! Your aspirant when sees all this material world without any differentiation and remains filled with total super consciousness and God realization, he remains always blissful without fear whatsoever".

To understand Vikalpa we can categorize them into four group's viz., those in an unmanifest state, those which are beginning to manifest, those which are at the point of manifestation and those which are fully manifest – corroborating with Para, Pashyanti, Madhima and Vaikhari. Vikalpa in the last three stages is in objective field. Sometimes like a flash of lightning, there occurs an instant, which is free of Vikalpas, and that is the point of contact with pure consciousness or say one's true nature. At this moment one experiences a state without thought waves. The Upayas are the means to stabilize this thought free state.

We can neither remove anything from consciousness nor add anything to it. The Vikalpas which cause suffering pertain to impure knowledge. Our goal is to experience consciousness. To acquire Nir-Vikalpa state we should receive the Sat Guru's instructions, practice Sadhna and keep good company. Journey of life is made through the Vikalpas arising in the mind. Through withdrawal of the senses, concentration and meditation etc. Vikalpa can be eliminated.

In Vigyan Bhairav it has been explained that Vikalpa can be used in a positive way in order to become free from these Vikalpas and thus establish one in Nirvkalp state.

सर्व देहं चिन्मयं हि जगद्वा परिभावयेत्।
युग पन्निर्विकल्पेन मनसा परमोद्भवः।। (Verse 63)

"An aspirant will experience the emergence of the highest consciousness, if he considers the entire body or the entire world simultaneously without thought construct as a form of consciousness." Again in Vigyan Bhairav verse 74 it is clear that one should experience totality of consciousness at all times wherever one finds satisfaction.

यत्र यत्र मनस्तुष्टि र्मनस्तत्रैव धारयेत।
तत्र तत्र परानन्द स्वरूपं संप्रवर्तते।।

Wherever a seeker's mind finds satisfaction let him concentrate on that. In every such case true nature of the highest bliss will manifest itself.

It is worthwhile to mention here that if an aspirant does not control his mind it becomes agitated by various Vikalpas and hence proceeds towards degradation, because satisfaction of mind lies in joy and not in an agitation.

A devotee should increase his mental one-pointedness and become centered in that state where he forgets everything else, thereby he gets established in his own true nature and hence remains seated in a world of perpetual Bliss.

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SHIVRATRI - ITS SPIRITUAL ESSENCE

Shri Vatoknath Bhairav is the main deity worshipped during Shivratri. Bhairav is synonymous with Lord Shiva. In fact, several Bhairavs assuming different names are the deities, that cover the whole Kashmir valley and are the symbols of Shiva – the ultimate reality. By the name Shiva we mean that Shakti is inherently present.

RITUAL ASPECT OF SHIVRATRI:

So far as ritual aspect of Shivratri is concerned it is a festival which starts with the dark fortnight or Krishna Paksh of Phalgun i.e. dark fortnight of February – March starting from first day of the fortnight commonly known as Hur Okdoh. From this day commences a weeklong activity of cleaning, washing the whole house, clothes, utensils and sanctifying the whole house with incenses and dhoop etc. The preparation for the festival is made with joy and merriment in which small children indulge in full measure. As Ganesh Utsav is to a Maharashtrian, Durga Pooja is to a Bengali, Bihu is to the Assamies and Pongal is to Tamils, so Shivratri has likewise importance for Pandits and they call it Herath. Shivratri is celebrated with enthusiasm and gaiety which makes it unique.

The 8th day of Shivratri Festival known as Hur Atham, People celebrate this day with pooja, recitation of Shiv Bhajan, Mahimnastotra etc. throughout the night in homes and temples. In Srinagar devotees visit Hari Parbat and Pukhribal Shrines and offer pooja to Goddess Sharika who is considered as the presiding deity of Srinagar.

On the 9th day daughters visit their parental homes and return on the 10th day to their In – laws with Kangri, Salt, Bread and Atgat (Some cash) and even new clothes and Herachbog (Good amount of cash). As per family Reeti (Tradition) Vegetarian or Non – vegetarian dishes are prepared especially on this day.

Then from the 11th day Shivratri celebrations start by cleaning the place selected for the performance of Vatak Pooja (Usually in Thokur Kuth – the prayer room).

On the 12th day, Vagur Bah, normally the potter would come with earthen ware pots used in the pooja and would be paid handsomely for it. Vatuk Samagri consisting of Herbs, Dhoop, Ghee, Til (Sesame Seed), Camphor, Flowers, Patri, Grass Rings (Aari), Vasur, Tilak, Incence Kand (Candy Sticks) etc. is collected and kept on one side of pooja room. Small earthen pots (Vagur) are filled with offering of cooked rice, vegetarian or non – vegetarian dishes etc. and pooja is performed.

On the 13th day named Herachtruvah, these earthen pots are filled with walnuts and fresh water. Usually the youngest lady of the household or newly wed bride is given this honour. Then pooja starts from dusk to mid – night when candies, milk, curd etc. are offered to Vatuk Noat (Pitcher) symbolizing Vatuk Nath (Lord Shiva) and Vatuk Chod (Small Pitcher) symbolizing Parvati. It may be mentioned that there are following earthen pots used in pooja:

a) Sanipatlu
b) Dopzuver
c) Saligram
d) Dulji
e) Sanivari

f) Eleven small pots for different Bhairvas are also worshipped along with Vatuk Nath – the main deity.

All these eleven pots are filled with cooked rice and dishes. There is another Dulji (Small pot) for the Rishis where only vegetable dishes are offered.

The whole family attends Pooja. After pooja Archana Sumptuous dishes already prepared for the occasion, (both veg. and non–veg.) as per the particular reeti (tradition) of the household are enjoyed jointly by the family members.

Next day is called Salam. On this day friends, relatives, neighbours visit to offer greetings with gifts and in return they are entertained with different dishes especially cooked fish and lotus root. Youngsters get Herach Kharach (Pocket money) from their elders.

Upto Amavasya (15th day) the process of Pooja Archana continues both in the Morning and Evening. On the 15th day Vatuk – raz is carried to a river bank where all the water of the pitcher is immersed in the river after ceremonial Pooja. The water soaked walnuts are distributed among all relatives, neighbours and friends. On Til Ashtami the great festival of Shivratri concludes. In the evening of Till Ashtami lamps are lightened (usually eleven) and kept at different spots in the house.

This socio–religious festival has unique importance for Kashmiri Hindus. Though the present exodus has disturbed the traditional cultural mosaic of the festival, yet the ritual and festival continues to be observed with fervour and all Kashmiri Pandits wherever they live at present celebrate it religiously. It is creditable that K.P.'s in their present plight have continued these customs and are nourishing their culture even with limited means at their command.

Shivratri also coincides with the change of the season and beginning of happy spring season.

SPIRITUAL ASPECT OF SHIVRATRI:-

1. Shivratri is more or less dominated by the ritualistic part of the spiritual pursuit. Ritualistic pooja commences from the first day and concludes on Til Ashtami; it continues for 21 days. Votak Natha Bhairava is the deity worshipped. Bhairavas are synonyms of Shiva. By Bhairava we mean Ba= Maintenance of the Universe Ra= Withdrawal of the Universe Va= Protection of the Universe. Thus Bhairava is one who brings about Srishti, Sithiti and Samhara of the universe. Shiva performs five fold actions viz:

1) Creation
2) Sustenance
3) Absorption
4) Emanation
5) Emanicipation

These five fold roles are associated with the five Mahaboots (elements) viz. earth, water, fire, air and ether.

According to the Sri Vatuknath Stotram Shiva is the holder of five fold divine energies which are:-

1. The energy of divine Consciousness (Chit)
2. The energy of divine Bliss (Ananda)
3. The energy of divine Will (Iccha)
4. The energy of divine Cognition (Jnana)
5. The energy of divine Act (Kriya).

The universe is caused by the unification of five-fold divine energies with Lord Shiva (Bhairava). "Bhairava holds within himself the entire universe by reducing all Shaktis to 'Sameness' with himself and in as much as he completely devours within himself the entire mass of ideation which is responsible for sense of difference.

(Commentary S.S Vim 1/5)

So experience within the realm of wisdom of Bhairava is only Prakasha which illumines everything from within, whether it is the mind, the intellect, the subconscious mind or the ego. It is Shiva in the form of Vimarasha who surveys from within everything which is illumined by Prakasha. Shiva is the entire cosmos in the form of Prakash and Vimarsh. By strengthening this awareness the maxim "Lose yourself to find yourself, to seek yourself is to lose yourself" is to be followed. There is no Shiva without you. You are nothing but Shiva. Achayra Utpaldev describes this condition as:-

शिवो भूत्वा यजेतेति भक्तो भूत्वति कथ्यते।
त्वमेव हि वपु सारं भक्तैरद्वय शोद्यितम्।। (S.T.V. 1/14)

Worship Lord Shiva after becoming Lord Shiva Himself. This is what has been said by the ardent devotees because they are experienced and have in real sense clarified that Shiva is Universal Being.

The 13th day of the dark Lunar fortnight falling in the month of Phalgun is considered auspicious. It is common with devotees to follow the tradition of observing fast, performing pooja and reciting hymns and Sutatis throughout the night. But elevated devotees believe and have experienced that on Shivratri doors leading to higher levels of consciousness to Shiva's transcendent abode are open and, therefore, Shivas Grace comes forth.

Acharya Utpaldev has beautifully described Shivrati as under:-

ज्योतिरस्ति कथयापि न किंचिद्विश्वम् अपिअति सुषुप्तमशेषम्।
यत्र नाथ शिवरात्रि पदेऽस्मिन् नित्यमर्चयति भक्तजनस्त्वाम्।।
(S.T.V. 15/17)

O lord in this Shivratri where there is no perception of internal external senses i.e. where there is no knowledge of difference of the knower and the known and where because of disappearance of all dualism whole universe is in deep sleep in that Shivratri (merger with Shiva) your elevated devotees are worshipping you.

Almost every Agma of Kashmir Shavism is based on knowledge that expresses itself in the form of dialogue between Shiva and Parvati. This marriage of Universal Consciousness (Shiva) and Universal Bliss (Parvati) is the real essence of Shivratri.

At another place Acharya Utpaldev the enunciator of Pratibyabijna system of Trika philosophy describes Shivratri as under:-

यत्र सोऽस्तमयमेति विवस्वांश्चन्द्रमः प्रभृतिभिः सह सर्वैः।
कापि सा विजयते शिवरात्रिः स्वप्रभा प्रसर भास्वररूपा।।

(S.T.V. 4/22)

(As a fruition of devotees consumated Sadhna) in that inexplicable situation where Sun (Pran/subjectiveness), Moon (Apan/objectiveness) and all stars (Cognitive faculties or thought constructs) are withdrawn and unlimited expanse of inherent brilliance shines let such Shivratri be victorious.

Actually Shivratri is a bright night for a Yogi and dark night for limited beings because limited beings feel only darkness at night. In Shrimad Bhagwad Gita "a Yogi awakes what appears night for others. Similarly what appears day to others the same is night for a Muni (perfect being). Wakeful awareness is self-consciousness, which in other words is the Ultimate Reality".

In Ishwar Pratiyabijna which contains all secrets of Agma it has been said:-

संसार नाटय प्रर्वतयिता सप्ते
ज्गाति जागरूक एक एवं परेश्वरः (Commentary S.S.V. 3/9)

When the whole world is asleep only the highest Lord the Producer of the whole world drama is awake. To explain further there is a story. Once there lived a king of crows and a king of owls. Both lived with their friends in the same forest on their respective trees. One day they met and the crow asked "why does your work begin at night." The owl replied, "O friend it is you who works at night." Then heated arguments were exchanged. As they argued the day wore on and became night. The owl said, "O king of crows now it is day". The crow replied "No friend it is night". They began to fight. At that time a swan arrived and said " Don't fight you are both right what is day for a crow is night for an owl. What is day for an owl is night for a crow." In the same way an ignorant person's day of sense pleasures and possession is night for a yogi and these are to be renounced. All pervasive light of bliss is night for an ignorant person. The advice and teaching of Satguru is that "Let us turn that night of ignorance into day so that we are filled with ecstasy and joy".

The world is Bhairava (Shiv) and Shiv is in the world. A Walnut tree springs from one walnut. Similarly the universe which is full of infinite forms springs from Shiva and exists in Shiva- The Supreme Consciousness.

Mention needs to be made here that on Shivratri walnuts are soaked in water and sanctified by Mantra "Aum, Hrim, Shrim, Devi-Puter Vatuknathay, Namah" it is believed to be a sacred act to distribute soaked walnuts to all relatives, neighbours and peasants so that these get cultivated for a soaked walnut has wonderful power to regenerate from its seed form to a big tree of bliss. This is perhaps the underlying significance of using walnuts on Shivratri.

In Trika system darkness of night denotes ignorance – which in turn denotes imperfect knowledge and is characterized by dualistic thinking which separates individual being from the absolute (Shiv). So Acharya Utpaldev has desired that such darkness should not prevail at all.

महा प्रकाश वपुषि विस्पष्टे भवति स्थिते।
सर्वतोऽपीश तत्कस्मात्तमसि प्रसराम्यहम्।। (S.T.V. 10/21)

O Lord even though your illumined essence is complete and universally evident why then do I venture into the darkness of dualistic objectiveness. From Svacchand Tantra quoted by Acharya Khem Raj in Shiv Sutr Vimarshani (1/5)

आत्मनो भैरवं रूपं भावयेद्यस्तुं पुरुषः
तस्य मन्त्रा प्रसिद्ध्यन्ति नित्ययुक्तस्य सुन्दरि।।

O Beautiful one (consort of Shiva/Parvati) for the man who has realized his Bhairava nature by comprehending an inner emergent divine nature and is thus united with the eternal, all the Mantras become effective, being charged with power. This is the spiritual essence of Shivratri.

Mystic Perspective of Shivratri:

Bhairava from the point of view of the mystic is that ultimate Reality in which Prakasha i.e. light of consciousness and Vimarsh or Eternal awareness of that light are indistinguishably fused. In other words Bairava is Param Shiva in whom Prakash and Vimarsh, Shiva and Shakti, Bhairava and Bhairavi are identical. Bhairava or Param Shiv embraces in Himself transcendence and immanance or Shiv and Shakti. It is this Bhairava that is the goal of the seeker, the characteristic of which is Swatantrya or Absolute Freedom.

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UPAYAS IN KASHMIR SHAVISIM

If we contemplate on the purpose of life, the question invariably arises "What is the origin of life". When a person is seeking knowledge of the origin of life, and begins to understand its reality, he occasionally loses interest in mundane matters. Sometimes he thinks that worldly knowledge may be a hindrance to the realization of the truth. This kind of thing occurs because of his limited knowledge of the truth. This also happens because of ignorance of ones own self.

In ones life there are two duties, on is to serve an illusion and the other is to serve the reality. When one serves the reality, he is elevated and when one serves an illusion he is deluded by 'maya'. Either he serves the illusion or the reality; one may think that he is the master but he is actually a servant. When one has family he may think that he is the master of his wife, children and home etc. Our position is always that of a servant, either as a servant of illusion or a servant of God/Shiva. If we remain servants of an illusion then our life is wasted. Everyone awakes to transcendent senses and when one actually becomes situated in true knowledge one can then become a servant of reality when one comes to the platform of knowledge, one understands that in all circumstances one is a servant. He is much better situated serving the reality instead of an illusion. When one becomes aware of this, one attains the platform of real knowledge. So, the true nature is essentially consciousness or Shiva for that reason, Iccha Shakti – the act of will, Jnana Shakti – the act of knowledge and Kirya Shakti – the divine action, exist in it. By freeing himself from attachment, and aversion and by detaching himself from praise and blame, a yogi experiences his own self.

Through the wisdom of Shakti in which the entire universe appears as "I" comes through Anugraha Shaktipat or Divine Grace one has to undergo spiritual discipline known as Upayas. These are 1) Sambhavupaya 2) Shaktupaya and 3) Anavupaya.

In reality all the Upayas are one. Their technique varies so as to suit the needs of different individuals having different temperaments, mental impurities countless lifetime impressions and various kinds of sundry understandings.

Samphavupaya: Through intense awakening all thoughts cease. Such experience in simple terms is called the Shambavopaya.

The universe is a garden for us to roam in with love, without any trace of attachments, jealousy, hatred or anxiety. We have to give up all desires. If something comes, let it come if something goes, let it go. It is all Shiva's play. This is all His reflection. If such an idea stays with us and the understanding that the world is the embodiment of Him, we need to love it. Meditate on the awareness that all conscious beings as well as inert matter are Shiva. This is a type of being an ascetic (Sanyasi). Shiva alone exists everywhere. The experience that the world is the embodiment of Shiva is known as Shambavupaya (Prakash-Vimarsh).

Shaktupaya : "God exists in the form. of feeling. The Bhagwad Gita says :

'मद्भावा मानसा जाता'

The world exists in my feeling. All activities take place according to ones understanding. According to the tendencies of mind, a particular man is one's father, mother, brother, daughter, son, Guru, friend etc. One's feelings of that person slow down when one no longer recognizes that person and treats that person as non-existent. Tendencies of mind therefore are positive as well as negative but once they merge into consciousness they become one with it. So mental tendencies are both dual and non-dual.

To obtain the experience of all pervasive unity through the power of feeling, one's thoughts gradually calm down and so one rejects dualistic tendencies, which exist in the ordinary state. Mantra is non-dual contemplation. Shiva Sutra (II/1) 'चित्तं मंत्रः' "The mind is that which illumines and understands the highest reality and becomes Mantra. Seeker worships a deity of the mantra. This is also established in Samb Panchashaka verse 15 "O Additti (Chit Surya) you are the knower, known and the knowledge so you are in fact seeker, the hymn and the deity of the hymn. I simply bow down with devotion, which you will accept. Because there cannot be any real entity other than you. Reverse of it is untrue". Through grace of a real Guru, a seeker loses the sense of duality. Thus, knowledge of his true nature is the source of contentment for such person. Therefore, Shaktupaya is a means of transcending worldly existence. It is a technique for pursuing a particular mental awareness arising from the group of syllables. Limitless powers are created by a group of letters. Therefore Shaktiupaya enables a person to become one with the truth, (I & This).

Anavupaya: It is also called Bhedopaya. The empirical self is known as anu.

A technique of approach by means of something different from essential self is Anavupaya. It uses Kriya (activity) in a gross form e.g. repetition of mantra, worship of a chosen deity, an idol etc.

Perfect absorption into the essential self is achieved through the following methods:

a) Ucchara b) Karna c) Dhyana d) Verna e) Sthana Kalpana (M.V. II-21).

Anavupaya leads to Saktaupaya, which in turn leads finally to Shamboupaya (Prakash-Vimarsh)

There is a fourth upaya, which is called Anupaya. This upaya is for superior seekers who are fully elevated. Here no action, rituals or meditation is required. Simply hearing the instructions of Guru within the short period of time and with firm faith one recognizes the ultimate experience of the doctrine of the Supreme Reality. This upaya is also known as Guru Kripa upaya – the Gurus' grace.

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Iti Shivam

Angad Business Centre
#0191-2574004, 9419186289